FOUR HUNDRED TEXTS

OF

HOLY SCRIPTURE,

WITH THEIR

CORRESPONDING PASSAGES,

Explained to the Understanding of COMMON PEOPLE, and arranged under the following Heads;

TEXTS, which appear contradictory:
——— not to be understood literally:
——— improperly translated:
——— better translated otherwise:
——— requiring explanation:
——— wrested or perverted:
THE PARABLES.

The Whole compiled with a view to promote religious Knowledge, and facilitate the reading of the Divine Writings.

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Blame not before thou haſt examined the Truth, underſtand firſt, and then rebuke. Ecclus. xi. 17.

———*Underſtandeſt thou what thou readeſt? and he ſaid, how can I, except ſome man ſhould guide me?* Acts viii. 30. 31.

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TO

HER GRACE THE MOST NOBLE

GERTRUDE,

DUTCHESS DOWAGER OF BEDFORD,

THE FOLLOWING EXPLANATIONS

ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY HER GRACE'S

MOST OBEDIENT

AND MOST DUTIFUL

SERVANT AND CHAPLAIN,

O. ST. J. COOPER.

INTRODUCTION.

NOtwithſtanding the general complaint of the wickedneſs of the preſent age, there are, I truſt, many thouſands of Chriſtians, at this day, who ſeriouſly and devoutly apply themſelves to underſtand the will of God from his written Word. This ſufficiently appears from the great encouragement given to thoſe numerous annotations on the Bible; the authors of which too frequently *make a gain of godlineſs*, and fill their voluminous books with notes, at beſt but trifling and inſignificant*. This I ſay not to derogate

* Such as the following:

Luke vii. 5. He loveth our nation, and hath built us a ſynagogue. Note, that is, at his own expence.

Luke viii. 21. that hear the word of God, and do it. Note, put it in practice.

Acts xvi. 30. What muſt I do to be ſaved? Note, for you can tell.

1 Eſdras i. 24. Thoſe that ſinned and did wickedly. Note, that is, were ungodly.

from the labours of pious and learned Commentators, whoſe works muſt be of the greateſt uſe to thoſe who come after them; and to whom the preſent collection is greatly indebted, but unfortunately they are too expenſive to fall within the reach of common people. To ſuch it would be uſeful, to be poſſeſſed of a *ſmall*, *cheap* volume, containing interpretations, not of every difficult text of Scripture (for that would exceed the learning of the wiſeſt among us), but only of the moſt remarkable paſſages, which may and do ſtrike ordinary readers. Such is the intention of the following ſheets, which, though few, need much apology: for it is a buſineſs of the moſt ſerious nature, as well as of great difficulty, to explain the Word of God; and ought never to be attempted without earneſt prayer, to invoke the aid of the Divine Spirit, leſt we ſhould ſay, *the Lord ſaith*, when indeed the Lord hath *not* ſaid ſo, and thus deceive ourſelves and others. The Bible, which is in every body's hands, in the Vulgar Tongue, contains indeed all that God requires of us: yet none can be the wiſer for what it contains, unleſs they are able to underſtand or read it. All men are not competent

competent judges in this caſe. Some, through ignorance, miſtake and miſapply the Holy Scripture, and by ſo doing fall into many and dangerous errors. To remove theſe, it is propoſed, in the firſt place, to conſider and explain thoſe

Texts which appear contradictory.

Every ſober Chriſtian will allow, that the Scriptures really contain *no contradictions*. Whatever *appear* ſuch, are capable of a clear explanation. God is a God of order, and therefore cannot contradict himſelf. If we conſider the writers, either of the Old or New Teſtament, we ſhall find *ſome* of them to be men of great learning and wiſdom, and *all* of them inſpired with the Holy Ghoſt: ſo that we may be ſure, whatever they have written is moſt exactly true. Yet we muſt ſuppoſe them to be men of no judgement, to write contradictions, and lay them ſo near together, as even a careleſs reader may obſerve in many of the Holy Writings. St. Luke was brought up in a learned profeſſion, and the hiſtory of The Acts ſhews him to have been a wiſe and prudent man: and therefore he could not intend ſo plain

a contradiction as appears to be in Acts ix. 7; and chap. xxii. 9. Many paſſages ſeem to claſh a little, which, on a nearer view, will be reconciled. Sometimes a figure of ſpeech is uſed, by which things are purpoſely and elegantly expreſſed, by a ſeeming contradiction, as Job xxii. 6. to *ſtrip the naked of their cloathing*. They who are really naked have no cloathing to be ſtript of: but it means, thoſe who are *badly cloathed*. So 1 Timothy v. 6. *She is dead while ſhe liveth*, that is, dead *ſpiritually* while ſhe lives *carnally*; and Matt. xi. 5. The *blind ſee, and the deaf hear*, that is, they who were once blind and deaf. There are alſo

Texts which are not to be underſtood literally.

No man's underſtanding can be ſo dull as to imagine our Saviour to be a *door*, a *vine*, a *lion*, a *lamb*, or a *mountain*, though he call himſelf ſuch, or be ſo repreſented by others. We may learn from the Scriptures themſelves, that the moſt literal ſenſe is not always that which is intended by the Holy Ghoſt. St. Paul, quoting this ſentence from Deut. xxv. 4. *Thou ſhalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth*

treadeth out the corn, asks, *doth God take care for oxen? or saith he it altogether for our sakes?* For our sakes, *no doubt this is written.* 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10.; that is, we are not to understand this text of the Old Testament literally of *oxen*, but apply it to the *ministers of the Gospel*, who should live by their labours therein. When men are called *wolves*, *foxes*, *swine*, *worms*, &c. it cannot be meant that they are such in reality, but only signifies their cruelty, subtilty, uncleanness, and weakness. Many figures of speech there are, well known to the learned, which represent things otherwise than they really are; as *Allegory*, *Metaphor*, and *Parable*. The latter of these will be particularly considered hereafter. By *Allegory*, words either convey a meaning different from their plain signification, as these in Ezekiel xxvii. 26. *Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters, the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas*, which relate not to a *ship*, but a *city*; or else, there may be another spiritual meaning, besides the common sense. Thus, by Abraham's two wives, St. Paul understands the two covenants. By *Agar, the bondwoman, and her son*, the *old law*:

and by *Sara*, the *free woman and her ſon*, the *Goſpel*, Gal. iv. 24. *Metaphor* tranſlates words from their firſt ſenſe to a figurative one. As when God is repreſented as having a body, hands, or feet: this is only in condeſcenſion to our underſtanding. Becauſe we cannot conceive how a perſon ſhould ſee or hear without eyes or ears, it is therefore ſaid, *The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayers.* Pſalm xxxiv. 15. Not that God hath *eyes* or *ears*; but having given us ſight and hearing, he muſt be able to obſerve and know all things himſelf. Under this head we may place, the Prophetic expreſſions; as light, and darkneſs, to ſignify *proſperity and adverſity*: Iſaiah lix. 9. Incenſe denotes *prayer*, Malachi i. 11. A foreſt repreſents a great city. Ezek. xx. 47. A mountain, the Chriſtian Church. Iſaiah ii. 2.

Some texts are not properly tranſlated.

Hence likewiſe ariſe errors in religion, as is too plain to be denied. The Holy Scriptures, being indited by the Spirit of God, do, in the language in which they were firſt written, contain the propereſt words to expreſs what we are to believe

and do: but this is not always the caſe with tranſlations. In the Scriptures, as tranſlated into our mother tongue, there may be, and are, ſome errors: for though the Sacred Writings be the infallible Word of God; yet the tranſlators were fallible men, and ſometimes miſtook. The utmoſt care has indeed been taken, in this reſpect, with the whole Bible; eſpecially the New Teſtament; yet ſome faults there are, and muſt be, as every language has ſome particulars, which cannot be ſo well expreſſed in another. Some words ſeem to be wrong tranſlated (if I may be allow'd the expreſſion) *purpoſely*, as where the true ſenſe would require explanation. Thus in the Epiſtle of St. James, ii. 2. *Goodly apparel* ſhould be *white* apparel: but then few would have known that white veſtments were at that time a mark of grandeur and diſtinction; white cloathing being much deſired by the Jewiſh nobility, as purple was by the Roman. In Matt. x. 9. *purſes* ſhould be *girdles*, it being the cuſtom of the ancients to carry their money in pockets at or in their girdles. Some are ill-tranſlated, yet well enough underſtood; as 2 Tim. ii. 17. *whoſe word doth eat as a canker*, inſtead

of a cancer, gangrene, or mortification: yet the ſenſe is known by either of theſe expreſſions.

Many texts may be better tranſlated otherwiſe than they are.

It has frequently happened, that where a word has two ſignifications, the leaſt proper has unhappily been choſen: as in Gen. xlvii. 31. the ſame word ſignifies *a bed*, and *a ſtaff* on which men lean: the former ſenſe being here preferred, contradicts Hebrews xi. 21; where the latter is uſed, which ſeems the moſt natural. In Exod. xxix. 37. and Levit. vi. 18. the Hebrew word ſignifies both *to ſanctify, or make holy*, and alſo, *to defile, or make unclean*, or to *ſet apart to unholy uſes:* therefore the firſt of theſe texts might be, *whatſoever toucheth the altar ſhall be* UNCLEAN; becauſe Moſes *forbids coming near the altar*, Numb. xviii. 3.; and the other, *every one that toucheth the offering of the Lord ſhall be* UNCLEAN, becauſe Moſes commanded that *every thing on which the blood of the offering was ſprinkled* ſhould be *waſhed in the holy place*, Levit. vi. 27. Some paſſages are ſo obſcure in the Engliſh, that they cannot be made ſenſe of; particularly, Iſaiah xxi. 12. which might, with more propriety, be read,

read, *the morning cometh, and alſo the night, though ye enquire never ſo impatiently ye ſhall certainly return again.* In ſome of the Pſalms, none of our tranſlations are intelligible.

Other texts require ſome explanation.

The common people in general cannot underſtand the Scripture aright, without *ſome aſſiſtance*; becauſe it is neceſſary to know *ſomething* of the cuſtoms, and manners, of the times and people therein mentioned, which *they* are unacquainted with; as they are with the uſual figures of rhetorick, frequent in all authors. To thoſe who know that the uſual dreſs of a king of Iſrael, on his throne of judgement, was a *white robe*; the expreſſion of our Saviour will be better underſtood, where, ſpeaking of the *lilies of the field*, he ſays, *that Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of theſe*, Luke xii. 27.; and, to ſuch as underſtand the cuſtoms of bridal entertainments among the Jews, the Parable of *the Ten Virgins* will be the clearer and more beautiful. To compenſate for this want of knowledge among the vulgar, the Sacred Writers frequently explain themſelves, or each other. That which is obſcure

ſcure in one place is often cleared up in another. Thus, what the Royal Pophet, in Pſalms xvi. 9. calls *his glory*; the Apoſtle, according to the Prophet's ſenſe and meaning, calls *his tongue*: Acts ii. 26. The unlearned, and neceſſitous, are more likely to improve this advantage, than the rich; who, inſtead of comparing Scripture with Scripture, too haſtily apply to Commentators, that are often miſtaken or deficient. The ſixth head explains

Texts which are wreſted or perverted.

This part, in a particular manner, obliges me to requeſt the reader to lay aſide all prejudice; and conſider theſe explanations *ſeriouſly*, and *impartially*, which contain, as I hope and believe, the real ſenſe of the text. An honeſt and good heart will greatly aſſiſt the underſtanding to find out the truth. Nothing is more likely to inform the mind, than an humble, teachable diſpoſition. Prejudice totally blinds the judgement. How elſe could wicked men perſuade themſelves and others, that the words *eternal* and *everlaſting*, when applied to the puniſhment of ſin, mean only a *temporary*, though indeed a *long duration?* If theſe expreſſions can be ſo perverted, what

what plain text can eſcape? Falſe teachers, to gain the greater credit, make the Word of God the ground of their miſtaken principles. There never was any hereſy, or ſchiſm in the Church, but what was pretended by the authors of it to be founded upon Scripture. They all plead *that*, for what they advance: and each pretends that his opinion, however erroneous, is agreeable to the words thereof. Ignorance, and a fickle diſpoſition, may cauſe men to pervert the words of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, as we may learn from St. Peter, who, 2 Peter iii. 16. ſays of St. Paul's Epiſtle, that the *unlearned, and unſtable, wreſt* ſome parts of them, *as they do other Scripture, to their own deſtruction:* and, if to their own deſtruction, certainly it is a dangerous thing ſo to wreſt and pervert them. Our Saviour expreſsly tells us, Mark x. 15. that *whoſoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he ſhall not enter therein:* and compares his diſciples to creatures of the moſt innocent kind, as doves, lambs, and little children, who have no prejudices againſt any. The laſt head contains

The

The Parables.

Theſe apply ſome feigned ſtory to a real truth, which would be leſs remarkable, or more diſagreeable, if expreſſed in plain language. Such is that of Nathan to David. 2 Sam. xii. 1. Sometimes one thing is compared with another, or likened unto it, as Mark iv. 30. *whereunto ſhall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what compariſon ſhall we compare it? It is like a grain of muſtard-ſeed*, &c. The firſt inſtance we have of this manner of ſpeaking is in Judges ix. 8. which ſee p. 146. It is frequently uſed by the Prophets and others in the Old Teſtament; and our Saviour, in the New: but not after his time, which is ſomething remarkable. Some are immediately explained, as Iſaiah v. 1. and 2. *My well beloved hath a Vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it*, &c. The ſeventh verſe tells us, that this *Vineyard* is the *houſe of Iſrael*, which had ſo ill-requited God's favours. It has been made a queſtion whether our Saviour's Parables were intended to render his doctrines clear to the vulgar, or to conceal them from their eyes: becauſe it is ſaid in Luke viii. 10. (which ſee explained p. 39.) *that ſeeing they might not ſee, and hearing they might not underſtand.*

Yet

Yet the former opinion ſeems to be the truth; not only becauſe all who have written upon the nature of a Parable do agree, that it is a plain, ſimple way of ſpeaking, proportioned to the underſtanding of the meaneſt capacity; but alſo, becauſe our Saviour himſelf ſays, in St. Matt. xiii. 13. *He ſpake to them in Parables, becauſe they ſeeing, ſee not; and hearing, hear not; neither do they underſtand.* That is, they did not *conſider*, nor *attend to*, and conſequently did not *underſtand*, what he had ſaid to them in a *common way*, and therefore he ſpake to them in Parables, or by compariſons, borrowed from things which the moſt ignorant did underſtand, to explain ſomething which they did not: and though ſome of theſe were not inſtantly comprehended by the Apoſtles, at which our Lord expreſſes ſome ſurprize, ſaying, *know ye not this* eaſy and familiar *Parable? how then will ye know all Parables?* Mark iv. 13.; yet he afterward explain'd them, verſe xxxiv. and commanded, that *what he told them in darkneſs, that they ſhould ſpeak in the light.* Matt. x. 27. But although theſe Parables might be clear to moſt men of thoſe times,

times, becauſe our Saviour in them frequently alluded to things immediately before their eyes; yet theſe objects being removed from us, every one does not now ſee the force and beauty of them, or perhaps not clearly underſtand them, without ſome little aſſiſtance. Thus much for the deſign of the following collection, which is contrived, for the moſt part, to be intelligible, when read *alone*: yet it is ſuppoſed that every one who *can* read it has a Bible at hand to conſult; or, rather, to read that, and conſult this, for the explanation of what may appear extraordinary. Laſtly, it is much to be wiſhed, that every one, intending to read a chapter in the Bible or Teſtament, would firſt implore the Divine Author of it to guide his heart to the knowledge of the truth, in ſome ſuch ejaculation as theſe. O Lord, *open thou mine eyes, that I may ſee the wondrous things of thy law.* Pſalm cxix. 18. Lord, *give me underſtanding, that I may learn thy commandments.* Pſalm cxix. 73. Or, if he pleaſes, in words to this effect. *Bleſſed Lord, who has cauſed all Holy Scriptures to be written for our learning, grant that I may ſo read, underſtand,*

understand, and consider them, that by patience and application I may find such comfort in thy Holy Word, as will enable me to lay hold on eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

FOUR

FOUR HUNDRED TEXTS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE, &c.

TEXTS WHICH APPEAR CONTRADICTORY.

GEN. i. 27. GEN. ii. 5.

IT appears like a contradiction in Moſes, firſt to deſcribe how God made Adam; and then, in the next chapter to ſay, *there was not a man to till the ground*. Some have therefore thought that the firſt of theſe verſes is miſplaced. But there needs no other anſwer to the objection than this: Moſes firſt gives a general account of the whole creation, in ſix days; and then, carrying on his hiſtory, deſcribes particularly the formation of Adam and Eve. In the third verſe of the ſecond Chapter it is ſaid, that God *had reſted from all his work, which he had created and made*: that is; He ceaſed to make any more creatures: therefore Adam was not made after this.

GEN. xv. 13. EXOD. xii. 41. ACTS vii. 6.

Two of theſe texts repreſent the Iſraelites as *ſerving the Egyptians, and being afflicted by them four hundred years*. The other gives the exact time, which was *four hundred and thirty years*. Scripture often ſets down an even number, without taking notice of a few either under or over. In 1 Chron. xxix. 27, we read that *David reigned in Hebron ſeven years*; though it was ſaid, 2 Sam. v. 5, that *in Hebron he reigned ſeven years and ſix months*. So, on the other hand, that the Iſraelites *eat manna forty years*; Exod. xvi. 35. It was, indeed, a little ſhort of this; as may be ſeen by comparing Exod. xvi. 1. with Joſhua v. 11.

GEN. xxii. 1. St. JAMES i. 13.

Temptation ſignifies no more than Tryal; any oppoſition or difficulty that may exerciſe our virtues, and ſo make them known. In this ſenſe God himſelf *tempts* men; that is, tries and proves them; and thus He *did tempt Abraham*. Sometimes temptation means dangerous trials, and enticements to ſin; under which we are more likely to ſink than overcome them. In this ſenſe *God tempteth not any man*: nor will He, if we reſiſt them, *ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able*. 1 Cor. x. 13.

GEN. xlviii. 8. 10.

In the firſt of theſe verſes it is ſaid that Iſrael *beheld Joſeph's ſons*. In the other; that *his eyes were*

were dim, ſo that he could not ſee. The meaning is not, that he could not ſee at all; but only, that he could not ſee plainly and diſtinctly the objects which were before him.

EXOD. vii. 13. EXOD. viii. 15. 1 SAM. vi. 6.

We muſt not underſtand by the firſt of theſe expreſſions, viz, *the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart*; that God cauſed ſuch a ſtrange obſtinacy in him: for the Hebrew words do but ill bear ſuch a tranſlation: and in the next chapter it is twice ſaid that *he hardened his* own *heart*: and alſo in the firſt book of Samuel, that *the Egyptians, and Pharaoh, hardened their hearts*. By the hiſtory it appears that the Lord did not harden Pharaoh's heart; at leaſt, not till after the ſixth plague. The meaning of all the above paſſages is plainly this; that Pharaoh would not be convinced by the miracles and judgements which he ſaw and felt; and that therefore God withdrew his grace from him, and then he could not but ſin.

EXOD. xxxiii. 11. St. JOHN i. 18.

Moſes is ſaid to have *talked with God face to face*: and Jacob to have *ſeen him*. Gen. xxxii. 30. But this only ſignifies that God revealed himſelf to them in a more particular manner than to others: *for God is a ſpirit whom no man hath ſeen or can ſee*, 1 Tim. vi. 16. that is, as He is in Heaven: and when Moſes deſired this fa-

vour of God, He denied it him; ſaying, *thou canſt not ſee my face, for there ſhall no man ſee me and live.* Exod. xxxiii. 20. St. John might therefore ſay here, and in his firſt epiſtle iv. 12, *no man hath ſeen God at any time.* The antient Chriſtian writers generally agree that the perſon who appeared to *Adam*, *Abraham*, *Moſes*, and the prophets, was the Word of God; the Son of God; Jeſus Chriſt.

Numb. iv. 3. Numb. viii. 24.

Two ways may theſe texts be reconciled: either by recollecting that the Levites were obliged to ſpend five years in learning the duties of their miniſtry, before they were admitted to officiate; or, that in Moſes's time, their conſecration began at the twenty-fifth year of their age; but afterwards, in the time of King David, at the twentieth year.

Numb. xxv. 9. 1 Cor. x. 8.

St. Paul tells us expreſsly, that the number of thoſe who were cut off in the plague, was *twenty-three thouſand.* Moſes makes them no leſs than *twenty-four thouſand*: becauſe in this number he includes the thouſand who were found guilty of idolatry, and thereupon ſlain with the ſword: whereas the Apoſtle ſpeaks of none but thoſe who died of the peſtilence.

DEUTERON. x. 4. MATT. xxii. 40.

The Commandments are by Moſes called *ten:* yet are they ſaid by our Saviour to be *two*; meaning that they are divided into two tables; the firſt containing the four firſt Commandments which relate to our duty to God: and the ſecond table containing the other ſix; which comprehend our duty to our neighbour.

DEUTERON. x. 22. ACTS vii. 14.

Jacob's family are differently reckoned at their going into Egypt. Moſes ſays they were *threeſcore and ten*: that is to ſay; all that *came out of Jacob's loins* (as it is Gen. xlvi. 26.) *were threeſcore and ſix*; beſides himſelf, Joſeph, and his two ſons, who were in Egypt before; which make threeſcore and ten. St. Stephen adds to theſe nine of his ſon's wives, and ſo makes the number *threeſcore and fifteen.* Theſe, though not of Jacob's blood, were *of his kindred,* as St. Stephen expreſſes it.

DEUTERON. xxviii. 68.

Sold, and no man ſhall buy you. This threat was literally fulfilled on the Jews (as a People), after Adrian had quelled their rebellion under Barcobeus. They were ſold into Egypt; and many of them no man would buy: all ſuch were ſure to be killed on account of their vaſt numbers.

JOSHUA XV. 32.

If we count the places foregoing, they are in number *thirty-eight:* which contradicts this aſſertion; *all the cities are twenty-nine.* The meaning is, that *twenty-nine* only belonged to Judah; the reſt being given to the tribe of Simeon; as we find in the 19th chapter; where nine of the cities here mentioned are ſaid to be of that tribe, which makes the number *thirty-eight.*

1 SAM. XVI. 18. 1 SAM. XVII. 33. 39.

There is a ſeeming contradiction in the hiſtory of king David. When he was recommended for the cure of Saul's diſorder, he is repreſented as *a mighty valiant man; a man of war; and prudent:* and accordingly he was preferred to be his *armour-bearer.* Yet, in the next chapter, when he comes to fight with Goliah, he proves *a youth unuſed to arms, and unable to bear them.* This ſeems to ſhew, that his affair with Goliah was before he was ſent to refreſh Saul; and that the laſt ſtory is given firſt; but properly, and naturally; for the hiſtorian, having told how God rejected Saul, and choſe David, he then informs us of the conſequence of his rejecting the one, and chuſing the other; namely, *the departure of God's ſpirit from Saul;* his being *troubled with an evil ſpirit,* which could only be appeaſed by David's ſkill on the harp. This ſtory is given, from the 14th to the 23d verſe of the 16th chapter; but in order

order of time ſhould come in between the 9th and 10th verſes of the 18th chapter; where the breach ſeems viſible.

2 SAM. x. 6. 1 CHRON. xix. 7.

In one of theſe texts it is ſaid; *they hired thirty-two thouſand chariots.* The meaning muſt be, ſo many men, who fought in chariots, when they ſaw cauſe: for in the book of Samuel it is expreſsly ſaid, that *they hired twenty thouſand footmen from Beth-rehob* and *Zoba*; *and twelve thouſand men of Iſhtob*; which make up the *thirty-two thouſand* mentioned in Chronicles.

2 SAM. xxiv. 1. 9. 1 CHRON. xxi. 1. 5.

A great miſtake has ariſen from miſunderſtanding the firſt of theſe texts; as if *God* moved David to number the people. A learned perſon tranſlates the verſe thus: *The anger of the Lord continued to burn againſt Iſrael; for David was moved* (namely, by Satan,) *to ſay, go number Iſrael and Judah. He* moved David: not *God*, but the *Devil* moved him; as is expreſsly ſaid 1 Chron. xxi. 1. *Satan provoked David to number Iſrael.* The numbers returned alſo differ conſiderably: eſpecially in relation to the men of Iſrael; who in the firſt text are returned *eight hundred thouſand*, but in the laſt *eleven hundred thouſand.* Obſerve; in the firſt, the *whole* of *Judah* is returned; and only the *men of approved valour* in *Iſrael.* In the other; the *whole* of *Iſrael* is expreſsly returned; but the

word *all* is not put before thoſe of *Judah*; and therefore perhaps only the men of tried valour are included: ſo the returns muſt of neceſſity be different.

2 Sam. xxiv. 24. 1 Chron. xxi. 25.

Theſe paſſages are eaſily reconciled, by putting a ſtop after the word *floor* in the firſt text: For there we are told *that David bought the threſhing floor* (but not at what price); *and the Oxen for fifty ſhekels of ſilver.* In the 2d; the price paid for the place is expreſsly ſet down to be *ſix hundred ſhekels of gold*; without mentioning any price paid for the oxen.

1 Kings viii. 9. Heb. ix. 4.

The firſt book of Kings informs us, that *in the ark was nothing ſave the two tables of ſtone, which Moſes put there at Horeb:* and yet, in the Epiſtle to the Hebrews, it is affirmed that *in the ark was the golden pot that had manna; and Araon's rod that budded*; and *the tables of the covenant.* Some imagine, that before the ark had any fixt and ſettled place (which is the time the Apoſtle refers to) all theſe things were included in it; though it was chiefly intended for nothing but the tables of the covenant; but that when it was placed in the temple, nothing remained in it but the two tables: all the other things were laid up in the treaſury of the temple;

ple; where the book of the law was found, in the days of king Joſias.

1 KINGS xii. 24. 1 KINGS xiv. 30.

God commanded Rehoboam and his people *not to go to fight with Iſrael*; and they obeyed his voice. But though they were commanded not to make war at that time, to recover the kingdom which they deſiſted from; yet it does not imply but that *there might be war*, or at leaſt perpetual enmity, *between theſe two Kings, all their days*, tho' they never came to a pitch'd battle.

1 KINGS xviii. 4. 13. 22.

It is ſaid in the 4th and 13th verſes, that *Obadiah preſerved an hundred of the Lord's Prophets by hiding them fifty in a cave, and feeding them with bread and water*: yet at the 22d verſe Elijah tells the people; *I, even I only remain a Prophet of the Lord.* We can hardly imagine therefore, that all the hundred which Obadiah preſerved were men actually inſpired, or endowed with the ſpirit of Prophecy; but only ſuch as were diſciples of the prophets, and candidates for that office. It is not unlikely, that even to Jeſebel's time there were remaining in Iſrael ſchools of the Prophets, which ſhe endeavoured to deſtroy, as well as thoſe who were bred up in them; that none might be left to inſtruct the people in the true Religion.

2 KINGS

2 KINGS vi. 23, 24.

No ſooner do we read of the kind treatment the Syrians received, but it immediately follows, that *the king of Syria beſieged Samaria*; which does not ſo well agree with what is ſaid in the verſe before; namely, *that the bands of the Syrians came no more into the land of Iſrael.* We can hardly think that an author would contradict himſelf ſo ſoon; therefore muſt ſuppoſe that the Syrians retreated for that time; though afterwards they attack'd them again: or that they ſent no more ſmall parties, or *bands*; but were reſolved to fall upon the Iſraelites at once; and with a regular army *beſiege Samaria.* Or elſe, that they came *no more that year*; which ſome think the meaning of the Hebrew.

2 KINGS xv. 30. 2 KINGS xvii. 1.

In the 15th chap. Hoſeah is ſaid to *have ſlain Pekah, in the 20th year of Jotham*; and to have *reign'd in his ſtead.* The 20th year of Jotham was certainly the 4th of Ahaz. But it is ſaid in the 17th chapter, that *in the 12th year of Ahaz Hoſea began to reign.* How can his reign begin in the 4th and 12th of Ahaz? The anſwer is; the beginning of his reign may be conſidered in a double reſpect. From the 4th of Ahaz to the 12th, he reigned as ſovereign; whereas after the 12th of Ahaz he was ſubject to the king of Aſſyria, and paid him tribute. See Chap. xviii. 10, 11.

2 KINGS xvi. 9. 2 CHRON. xxviii. 20.

One of theſe verſes intimates, that the King of Aſſyria *helped Ahaz*: the other; that *he diſtreſſed him, and helped him not*. Both are true. He did help him againſt the King of Aſſyria; took Damaſcus; and delivered Ahaz from the power of the Syrians. But this did him little good: for he helped him not to recover the cities the Philiſtines had taken from him: nor did he lend him any forces to join his own; but rather weakened him by exhauſting his treaſures, and deſtroying Samaria; whereby the way was open to ſpoil his country more eaſily in the next reign.

1 CHRON. iii. 17. JEREM. xxiii. 30. MATT. i. 12.

In two of theſe texts, Jeconiah is ſaid to be *childleſs*: yet in the other he is ſaid to *have children*. The meaning is: he had no child to ſucceed him; his children dying before him.

2 CHRON. xiv. 3. 5. 2 CHRON. xv. 17.

It is twice ſaid in the firſt of theſe chapters, that *Aſa did take away the high places*: yet in the ſecond, that *the high places were not taken away out of Iſrael*. Therefore we may ſuppoſe that the former relate only to *Judah*: but, from the territories he had conquered out of the land of *Iſrael*, he was not able to remove them. Or the latter may be underſtood thus: he took away

away thoſe high places which were for the ſervice of other gods; but let thoſe alone where the true God only was worſhiped.

ISAIAH ix. 7. DAN. vii. 14. 1 COR. xv. 24.

The Prophets have foretold of Chriſt's kingdom, that it is *everlaſting*; and *ſhall ſtand for ever*. St. Paul ſays it ſhall *have an end*. To reconcile theſe, we muſt obſerve, that the expreſſions of *everlaſting*, and *without end*, are uſed in all authors in a ſenſe very different from the common one. Thus in Scripture we read of *everlaſting mountains*: Habak. iii. 6. and, in Exodus xxi. 6. a ſervant is ſaid *to ſerve his maſter for ever*: that is, during his maſter's life. When therefore it is ſaid, Chriſt ſhall *reign for ever*; the meaning is that he ſhall reign as long as the world laſts: and when it is ſaid, *of his kingdom there ſhall be no end*, Luke i. 33. the meaning is, that it ſhall not paſs away like other kingdoms; and there ſhall be no end of it, till the end of all things.

JEREMIAH xxxii. 4. EZEK. xii. 13.

Jeremiah propheſied of Zedekiah, that he ſhould be *delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon*, whom he ſhould ſee and ſpeak with; and that he ſhould go to Babylon. Ezekiel propheſied of the ſame prince, that he ſhould go to Babylon; but yet *he ſhould not ſee it, tho' he ſhould die there*. Joſephus tells us that the ſeeming inconſiſtency of thoſe two prophecies determined

mined Zedekiah to believe neither of them: yet both were exactly fulfilled. He was *taken in the plains of Jericho, and ſent to the king of Babylon to Riblah*, 2 Kings xxv. 5, 6. where he then reſided; whom he ſaw and ſpoke to; and who cauſed his *eyes to be put out*; and then *ſent him to Babylon*, which he could not then ſee. Here he was impriſoned, and died.

Jeremiah li. 31.

It ſeems a contradiction to ſay, *one poſt ſhall run to meet another, and one meſſenger to meet another, to ſhew the king of Babylon that his city is taken* (not at *one end* as our Tranſlation ſays, but) *at the extremity*. Yet this was ſtrictly true; for Babylon was taken at each end at the ſame time; ſo that the meſſengers, who carried the news to the king at his palace in the middle of the city, did run to *meet* each other, as coming from oppoſite quarters.

Matt. i. Luke iii.

Whatever contradictions may now be thought to be, in the genealogy of Chriſt, as given by St. Matthew and St. Luke; it was certainly underſtood, and acknowledged, by all perſons of that time. The genealogies of the Jews were public and well known; they could repeat them as readily as their own names: therefore the Evangeliſts could not give a falſe one without being diſcovered immediately. We muſt then

believe that both theſe are true. There were two ways of reckoning deſcents among the Jews. One, common to them and all other nations, by the courſe of deſcent from father to ſon. The other was by legal deſcent, eſtabliſhed by their law; according to which, *if an elder brother died without iſſue, and left a widow, the next brother was to take her to wife; and their firſt-born ſon was, in law, the ſon of the elder brother, and ſucceeded to his eſtate.* St. Luke, writing to the Gentiles, draws the pedigree of Chriſt in a way underſtood by them. St. Matthew, writing to the Jews, follows the method of ſucceſſion among the Jews; and draws out the genealogy according to the legal deſcent.

MATT. v. 16, MATT. vi. 3.

The command, to *let our light ſhine before men*, does not contradict the rule in the other text, to do acts of charity *privately*: for Chriſt only deſigned to guard againſt pride and vain-glory, when he required *alms to be given in ſecret*; and that we ſhould not ſeek the praiſe of men. The one of theſe rules is more excellent; the other more ſafe.

MATT. viii. 5. LUKE vii. 3.

St. Matthew's account is, that a Centurion *came* to Chriſt. Yet St. Luke ſays, He did *not come*, but *ſent*. This was a more humble way of coming to Chriſt, by mediators and interceſſors.

MATT. viii. 28. MARK v. 1. LUKE viii. 26.

The town of *Gadara* was in the province of *Gergaſa:* and tho' St. Mark and St. Luke ſay *Gadarenes*, this does not make the Evangeliſts inconſiſtent; for the region of the Gergaſenes, being of broader extent than the region of the Gadarenes, included Gadara in it. One Evangeliſt gives the name of the country; the other, of a particular ſpot only.

MATT. viii. 28. MARK v. 2. LUKE viii. 27.

St. Mark and St. Luke ſay only *one*; St. Matthew, that there were *two poſſeſſed*. The reaſon ſeems to be this: one of the two was a Gergaſene, and a Jew: ſo, in the caſting the Devil out of him, our Lord did only what He had frequently done in Judea before. But the other was a Gadarene; that is, one of a Heathen city. Of this one St. Mark and St. Luke chiefly take notice, as being a more remarkable and rare inſtance; this being almoſt the only example of a cure being wrought on a Heathen.

MATT. x. 10. MARK vi. 8.

The firſt text, where the Diſciples are commanded to *provide for their journey, neither ſhoes, nor yet ſtaves*, agrees well with that of St. Mark, where they are permitted to take *a ſtaff*; and is as if Chriſt had ſaid, go juſt as you are, with

with the ſame coat, ſhoes, and ſtaff, that each man now has.

MATT. xii. 10. MARK iii. 4. LUKE vi. 9.

The former Evangeliſt is not contrary to the two latter, who ſay that *Chriſt aſked them.* Both are true. They aſked him whether it were *lawful to heal on the Sabbath-days*; and he replies by ſaying, *I will* alſo *aſk you*, whether it be *lawful to do good on the Sabbath-days?*

MATT. xii. 40. MARK viii. 31.

Three nights and three days are the ſame as *three days*; and theſe expreſſions are often uſed one for the other. But the words *after three days* are very full and expreſſive: yet the chief prieſts will inform us how we are to underſtand them. *Sir*, ſaid they to Pilate, *we remember that that deceiver ſaid while he was yet alive, after three days I will riſe again.* Yet their demand is, *that the ſepulchre be made ſure* only *till the third day.* Matt. xxvii. 63, 64. Here is the authority of the chief prieſts and Phariſees, that *after three days*, and, *till the third day*, were equal expreſſions; and were ſo underſtood in the common language of that country. Juſt ſo, when Rehoboam had ſaid to the people, *come again to me after three days*; it follows; *ſo all the people came to Rehoboam on the third day, as the king bade, ſaying, come again to me on the third day.* 2 Chron. x. 5. 12. The Jews uſed to reckon part of a day, and even one hour, for a whole day; particularly when they explained

explained the law that orders children to be circumciſed the 8th day.

MATT. xiii. 12.

He that hath, ſignifies him that improves the advantages which God has given him; and ſo receives more. *He that hath not*, is he that makes ſo ill uſe of them, that he is as though he had them not. *From him that hath, ſhall be taken away, even that he hath*; or (as it is in St. Luke viii. 18.) *that which he ſeemeth to have*; means the talents inſtruſted to him; as is explained by a Parable in chapter xxv. 14.

MATT. xiv. 5. MARK vi. 19.

To reconcile the former with the latter text, where it is implied that *Herodias would have put St. John to death, but could not prevail with Herod to do it*; it may be ſaid that Herod was willing enough to do it; but was withheld from the action, partly *by fear of the people*, and partly by checks of conſcience, *knowing St. John to be a juſt man, and holy*; and that his death might be avenged on him by a righteous God; as Joſephus ſays the Jews thought it was, by the deſtruction of his army.

MATT. xiv. 22. 34. MARK vi. 45. JOHN vi. 17.

St. Matthew and St. Mark tell us, that our Saviour ordered his Apoſtles to croſs the ſea, and wait for him on the other ſide at *Bethſaida*.

St. John writes, that they entered into a ſhip, but *went over the ſea, toward Capernaum:* yet, after all, St. Mark ſays, *they landed* at neither, but in the country of *Genneſareth.* To reconcile this, we need only remember what *all* the Evangeliſts tell us; viz. that while the Apoſtles were on board, there aroſe a ſtrong gale of wind which proved *contrary:* ſo that inſtead of arriving at Bethſaida, they found themſelves next morning on the oppoſite ſide not far from Tiberias, and to the ſouth of Capernaum. Tho' therefore our Saviour ordered them to go to Bethſaida, yet they could not do it becauſe the wind was againſt them. Their next attempt was to get to *Capernaum*; but even *that* they could not do; but, being forced to yield to the ſtorm, were carried a good way below it; from whence they juſt touch'd at Nazareth, and thence proceeded to Capernaum.

MATT. xvii. 1. MARK ix. 2. LUKE. ix. 28.

What St. Luke calls *about eight days*, St. Matthew and St. Mark make *after* ſix *days:* but the reaſon of the ſeeming diſagreement is, that the two laſt Evangeliſts compute only the entire days between our Saviour's diſcourſe and his going up into the mount; and therefore ſtyle them *ſix:* whereas St. Luke, including both the days of his diſcourſe and aſcent, calls them *eight.* Thus notes are reckoned in muſic: and thus Phyſicians reckon when they ſpeak of agues; a tertian intermitting one day; and a quartan two.

MATT. xviii. 1. MARK ix. 33. LUKE. ix. 46.

St. Matthew tells us that the diſciples *came to Jeſus*: St. Mark, that *Chriſt put the queſtion to them*: and St. Luke, that they had been *diſputing* this point *among themſelves*, and *Jeſus perceived their thoughts*. The hiſtory is this. As Jeſus was going to Capernaum, his diſciples followed him diſcourſing among themſelves. When they came *into the houſe, He aſked them, what was it ye diſputed among yourſelves by the way?* but they, being aſhamed to tell him, *held their peace. Then Jeſus took a child, &c.* The words in St. Matthew relate not to Jeſus, but to the diſciples; and mean not the *outward ſpeech*; but the inward reaſoning of the heart; which is plain from their *ſilence, and Jeſus's perceiving their thoughts*. Had they put the queſtion to our Saviour (as our verſion of St. Matthew implies), why ſhould they not have anſwered his demand? and, if they had already declared their thoughts in plain words, why is it ſaid, *He perceived the thoughts of their hearts?*

MATT. xx. 21. MARK x. 37.

James and John, with their mother, came to Chriſt, and deſired *that they might ſit* with him in his kingdom. St. Matthew ſays, it was the *mother who aſked this for her ſons*. The mother and ſons, being together, jointly put up their petitions. Or the ſons, having got their mother to make the requeſt to Chriſt, may

properly enough be ſaid to have done it themſelves.

MATT. xxvi. 34. MARK xiv. 30.

This night before the Cock crow: that is, the time from twelve at night to three in the morning, which laſt hour is called the ſecond cock-crowing. So that what in St. Mark is, *before the cock crow twice*, is, in St. Matthew, *before the cock crow*; or within the time of cock-crowing; and ſignifies the ſame thing; and is as much as if Chriſt had ſaid before three o'clock in the morning. If, inſtead of the word *twice*, it had been, *the ſecond time*, fewer people would have been miſtaken, and all the Evangeliſts found to agree.

MATT. xxvi. 57. LUKE iii. 2. JOHN xi. 49.

It is plain from Scripture, *Caiphas* was high prieſt at the time of Chriſt's death. Yet it is ſaid by St. Luke, that *Annas and Caiphas being high prieſts, the word of the Lord came unto John.* Annas was not actually highprieſt at that time; but only his vicar to ſupply his place upon occaſion. Beſides, the dignity of the high prieſt was for life: they always retained the name, though they were depoſed. Annas had great authority, having been high prieſt himſelf, and ſeen both his own ſon, and ſon-in-law, in the ſame high ſtation.

MATT. xxvii. 5. ACTS i. 18.

St. Matthew ſays, *Judas hanged himſelf.* St. Peter, that *he burſt aſunder in the midſt.* Judas firſt hanged himſelf; and then the rope breaking, he fell down; and burſting aſunder, *his bowels guſhed out.*

MATT. xxvii. 32. JOHN xix. 17.

In one place it is ſaid, *Chriſt bore his croſs* toward the place of his crucifixion: in the other, that *Simon was compelled to bear it for him.* It was the cuſtom of the Jews, that he who was to be crucified ſhould carry his own croſs: and ſo our Saviour for ſome time did: but it being found too heavy for him, Simon was compelled to bear it with him, or for him.

MATT. xxvii. 34. MARK xv. 23.

One Evangeliſt ſays, they gave Chriſt *vinegar to drink mingled with gall.* The other, *wine mingled with myrrh.* To reconcile this, it has been ſaid, that there were *two* cups offered to our Lord at the time of his crucifixion; the one of wine mix'd with myrrh, by ſome of his friends (for it was allowable, from motives of humanity, to give an intoxicating, ſtupifying mixture, to take away the ſenſe of pain), *before* he was nail'd to the croſs; and the other, of vinegar and gall, or wormwood, by the ſoldiers, in a ſcoffing manner, *after* he was nailed to it. But it ſeems rather a miſtake of the tranſlators:

for the laſt of theſe texts ſhould be, *ſour wine*, which is vinegar, as its name teſtifies: and the Hebrew words for *myrrh* and *gall* are eaſily miſtaken for each other.

MATT. xxvii. 38. LUKE xxiii. 39.

St. Luke ſays that *one of the thieves* only, that was crucified with Chriſt, upbraided him; and *the other rebuked him for it*. To reconcile him with St. Matthew, let it be obſerved, that it is uſual with the Evangeliſts to aſcribe that to *many*, which agrees only to *one*. So that is ſaid to be *written in the Prophets*, which is written only in *one* of them. So alſo, the ſoldiers brought him vinegar: Luke xxiii. 36. John xix. 29; that is; *one* of them did it. Matthew xxvii. 48. Mark xv. 36.

MATT. xxvii. 55, 56. JOHN xix. 25.

St. John, mentioning the diſcourſe which Jeſus had with his mother and his beloved diſciple at the time of his crucifixion, ſays, that ſhe and Mary Magdalen *ſtood near the croſs*. St. Matthew, on the other hand, ſays, that Mary Magdalen and other women were there *beholding afar off*. Both theſe may be true. The crucifixion was a work of time; and laſted ſeveral hours. So that the women, who were at a diſtance from the croſs, might, during its continuance, draw near it: or, from being near, might remove from it. The two Evangeliſts do not ſpeak of the ſame point of time.

MATT.

MATT. xxviii. 1. MARK xvi. 2. JOHN xx. 1.

The *day beginning to dawn*, of St. Matthew; and *while it was yet dark*, of St. John; will readily be allowed to mean the ſame point of time; namely, the ending of the night, and beginning of the day. But how is it to be reconciled with the time mentioned by St. Mark, namely, *the riſing of the Sun?* why, by ſuppoſing that St. Matthew and St. John ſpeak of the women ſetting out; and St. Mark, of their arrival at the ſepulchre.

MARK ii. 4. LUKE v. 19.

How could they *uncover the* houſe, when they could not ſo much as *get at it* by reaſon of the throng that was before the door? Thus: in Judea, the houſes were low and flat-roofed; and ſurrounded with a battlement breaſt-high. They had two ways up to the tops of them: one, by a pair of ſtairs within, leading to a trap-door on the roof: the other, on the outſide of the houſe, by a pair of ſtairs by which they could aſcend to the roof when they pleaſed, without going into the houſe. They who brought *the man ſick of the palſy*, finding that they could not come at the door, went round; and coming to the ſtairs which ſtood on the outſide of the houſe, carried him up this way to the top; finding the trap door ſhut, they forced it open; which St. Mark calls *uncovering*, or breaking up *the roof*; and they conveyed him down that

way; which St. Luke calls *letting him down thro' the tiling: that is*, thro' the roof; becauſe all the roof, except where the door was, was paved with tiles. Thus they eaſily placed the man beſore Jeſus.

MARK XV. 25. JOHN XIX. 14.

About the ſixth hour, that is, about ſix o'clock in the morning, Pilate paſſed ſentence on Jeſus Chriſt. St. Mark ſeems to relate to the time of our Lord's being nailed to the croſs, when he ſays *it was the third hour*, that is, nine o'clock in the morning, when they crucified him.

LUKE XXIV. 33. JOHN XX. 24.

In St. Luke it is ſaid, *the eleven* were *gathered together*; tho it appears, by St. John, that *St. Thomas was abſent*. A general meeting of the Apoſtles is called, a *meeting of the eleven*, or a *meeting of the twelve*; tho' one, or more, happen to be abſent. This is agreeable to ancient and modern uſage; as in caſe of councils, parliaments, &c. &c.

JOHN iii. 22. JOHN iv. 1. 2.

In both theſe texts it is ſaid that *Jeſus baptiſed*; and in one of them that he *baptiſed not*. The former is explained by the latter to be meant, not of baptiſm performed by *himſelf*, but by his *diſciples*, who baptiſed in his name.

JOHN

JOHN vii. 28. JOHN viii. 14.

In different reſpects, both theſe texts are true. As to Chriſt's human original; the Jews very well *knew who he was, and whence He came*; that is, of what parents according to the fleſh: but they *knew not* his divine excellency, and deſcent from Heaven.

ACTS ix. 7. ACTS xxii. 9.

St. Paul heard, but they who were with him *heard not the voice of him that ſpake to* him: and yet it is ſaid, that *they did hear a voice:* that is, they heard a voice; but did not underſtand diſtinctly what was ſaid; tho' they might hear a confuſed noiſe like thunder. So, on another occaſion, ſome hearing *a voice from Heaven, ſaid, it thundered*; John xii. 29. Or, a voice, in the firſt text, may mean, hearing Saul's voice, anſwering the apparition.

ROMANS iii. 20.

Strictly ſpeaking, *inviſible things* cannot poſſibly be *clearly ſeen:* but they may be much illuſtrated, and made more plain and clear: and this is the meaning of the expreſſion.

GALA. ii. 8. JAMES ii. 14.

By grace ye are ſaved thro' faith, ſays St. Paul. Yet St. James aſks a queſtion, in a manner which

which implies an impoſſibility. *Can faith ſave him?* Theſe two apoſtles wrote to different ſorts of perſons on different ſubjects; and uſe the ſame word in a different ſenſe. By faith, St. *Paul* means, Chriſtian religion; in oppoſition to the law of Moſes. *St. James*, by faith, means, the bare acknowledgement and belief of the Goſpel; without the good works required in that Goſpel.

TEXTS NOT TO BE UNDERSTOOD LITERALLY.

GENESIS iii. 15.

IT ſhall bruiſe thy head. By the ſerpent's head, is meant the power of the Devil; which the ſeed of the woman (that is, Chriſt) was to ſubdue. *Thou ſhalt bruiſe his heel:* that is, man ſhall receive ſome damage; tho' not in any principal part.

By

Genesis vi. 2.

By *the ſons of God*, are here meant ſons of princes or ſovereigns; as when it is ſaid, *I have ſaid ye are Gods*. Pſalm lxxxii. 6. And by *daughters of men*, is to be underſtood, the daughters of inferior perſons. So that the ſenſe of the verſe will be this; the ſons of the great and powerful men ſaw the fair daughters of their inferiors; and took them wives, by force, of whom they pleaſed.

Genesis xix. 26.

That Lot's wife was not changed into a *pillar of ſalt*, ſuch as we uſe at this day, is certain; becauſe it would ſoon have been diſſolved by the rain, and long ſince forgotten. Some therefore ſuppoſe that ſhe was only curſed with barrenneſs; of which, ſalt is an emblem. But this is going too far from the literal meaning. The moſt probable account therefore that can be given, is; that ſhe was changed into a pillar of ſome other kind of ſalt. For the author of the Book of Wiſdom calls it *a ſtanding pillar of ſalt*; chapter x. verſe 8. Joſephus ſays he had ſeen it. Some modern travellers ſay it remaineth to this day.

Genesis xix. 31.

Not a man in the earth: that is, in this place or cave where we are confined. The daughters of

of Lot did not act from luſt or lewdneſs, as is plain from the foregoing words; and from their having preſerved their innocence in a moſt wicked city. If we are to underſtand theſe words literally; we muſt ſuppoſe they thought that all the other towns were deſtroyed, not knowing how far the fire from the Lord might extend. Perhaps they might mean that there was not *a man in the earth* of their *family or kindred, to marry them:* as was the cuſtom of thoſe times.

Genesis xxix. 31. 33.

In both theſe verſes, it is ſaid of Leah, that Jacob *hated her.* The meaning is; he did not love her ſo well as he did Rachael. This is plainly expreſſed at the 30th verſe. The Hebrew language has no word to diſtinguiſh between the extremes of love and hatred. Thus it is ſaid, Romans ix. 13. *Jacob have I loved, but Eſau have I hated* Not that God *hated* Eſau; *but loved him* and his poſterity *leſs*; and gave the preference to Jacob and his.

Judges v. 20.

By the *ſtars fighting*, is to be underſtood, that by the ſhining of the ſtars the Iſraelites had time to finiſh the battle. So the ſtars might be ſaid to aſſiſt, or *fight for them.*

Judges

JUDGES xvii. 2.

About which thou curſedſt. The Mother of Micah did not *curſe profanely* or wickedly: but ſhe put the ſacrilegious thief under an oath or curſe: and the ſenſe is the ſame as if Micah had ſaid, *about which thou obligedſt people to clear themſelves by an oath or curſe*; which ſo terrified Micah, that he confeſſed he had the money.

2 CHRON. xv. 3.

Without the true God. For want of the true prieſthood, the Iſraelites are here called Idolaters; and are ſaid to have neither *God, law,* religion, nor *prieſthood,* though they pretended to worſhip the true God that brought them up out of Egypt.

PSALM cviii. 9.

Caſting the ſhoe upon a piece of ground, is thought to be the antient form of taking poſſeſſion among the Jews; perhaps with ſome view to the promiſe of God made to Iſrael, Deut. xi. 24; every place whereon the ſoles of your feet ſhall tread, ſhall be yours.

PSALM cix.

There has been much needleſs pains taken to juſtify the conduct of King David and others in wiſhing ill to their enemies: as that the Hebrew may be underſtood prophetically; and

ſignify, that ſuch things ſhall befall men as are there expreſſed. This may be ſo; particularly in the Pſalms; for David would never make his own ſufferings and reſentments part of the public worſhip of God. But whoever conſiders the great indulgence given to revenge, by the law of Moſes, from the expreſs permiſſion of returning injuries, and the vehement curſing their enemies, will ſoon ſee that theſe great and good men were not yet acquainted with the perfect rule of charity, or love to enemies, which was only to be taught by a ſuffering Saviour. As perfect as theſe ſaints appeared to be then; they fell ſhort of the common character of our Saviour's diſciples: and *the leaſt in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than they.*

Proverbs xiii. 24.

Not that a man actually *hateth* his own child by *ſparing the rod*; but acts as if he did ſo by the event; namely, by with-holding the proper correction, which alone is able to make him wiſe and good.

Isaiah xx. 2, 3.

This account of the prophet Iſaiah's *walking naked for three years* cannot be underſtood literally, becauſe of the indecency of it. The particular dreſs of a prophet was an outer garment of hair. Such was John the Baptiſt cloathed with, Matt. iii. 4. By *walking naked*, then, is only

only meant, going without the upper garment, or prophetical robe.

Isaiah xxv. 6.

On this mountain ſhall the Lord make to all people a feaſt of fat things, &c. This was never fulfilled; nor could ever be ſuppoſed to be ſo: therefore the words ſignify more when literally taken. In Scripture, God's calling men to a better way of life, and a more perfect knowledge of him, is expreſſed by inviting to *a feaſt of fat things*, Prov. ix. 2. So our Saviour compares God's calling men to happineſs, to *a King making a marriage feaſt for his ſon*, Matt. xxii. 2. The feaſt being here ſaid to be *for all people*, we may with great reaſon ſuppoſe it to be meant of calling the Gentiles to the knowledge of the true God.

Isaiah lxv. 20.

The child ſhall die an hundred years old: that is; he that dies an hundred years old, ſhall die a child; or as if cut off in the beginning of his days. Long life ſhall be the bleſſing of this happy ſtate.

Jeremiah vii. 22.

It is not literally true that God did *not command ſacrifice, and burnt-offerings:* but it muſt be underſtood, that he did not command *them only:* for it immediately follows, *but this thing I com-*

I commanded them. As if God had ſaid, put me not off with outward ſervices only, ſuch as ſacrifices and burnt-offerings; but take care alſo to obey the laws of piety, juſtice, and charity, which I have given you.

JEREMIAH xiii. 23.

The difficulty of breaking off evil habits is indeed very great, as the prophet intends to ſhew, by ſaying, *can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the Leopard his ſpots?* Yet the expreſſion is much to be mitigated; and means not an *impoſſibility*; but only *a great difficulty.* The change of men ſettled in bad habits is difficult; yet there is hope and encouragement from Scripture, that it may be done; and by God's grace it *will be done* when we heartily ſet about it.

EZEKIEL xx. 47.

The *good* or *juſt* man is by the prophets frequently repreſented under the figure of a *green tree*, as Pſal. i. 3. and lii. 10. And of the wicked it is ſaid, *his branch ſhall not be green*, Job xv. 32. Thus when God threatens by the prophet Ezekiel, that he will cut off *every green tree, and every dry tree, in Jeruſalem*; it means that he will cut off both the righteous and the wicked, as the words are explained in chap. xxi. 3.

AMOS

AMOS vii. 14.

By this expreſſion, *I was no prophet neither a prophet's ſon*; Amos means, that he was neither a teacher nor a learner in the ſchools or colleges of the prophets, and therefore not qualified for that office by his education. From the time of Samuel, there were appointed ſchools for training men up, and fitting them for the prophetic office; and God uſually made choice of perſons of this education; which was the reaſon of this ſpeech of the prophet.

MATT. v. 22.

Here are different degrees of puniſhment for different offences. *Whoſoever is angry with his brother without a cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the judgement*, or leſſer ſanhedrin of the Jews, which conſiſted of twenty-three judges. *Whoſoever ſhall ſay to his brother*, without a cauſe, *Raca*, which ſignifies empty, vain, worthleſs fellow, *ſhall be in danger of the council*, or greater ſanhedrin, which conſiſted of ſeventy-three Judges. *But whoſoever ſhall ſay, thou fool, ſhall be in danger of hell-fire*; that is, of the fire of the valley of Hinnom, or Tophet. By the word *fool*, we muſt underſtand ſome other term of great reproach, which carries a notion of wickedneſs; *folly* in Scripture being often the ſame as *ſin*. Or elſe, that we call no man fool without *cauſe*; for our Saviour himſelf

calls the Phariſees both *fools and blind. Brother*, here, means any Chriſtian.

MATT. v. 29.

To *cut off a right hand, or pull out a right eye*, would be contrary to the ſixth commandment, which requires us to be tender of our own lives, as well as the lives of others. Beſides; ſuch a mangling of the body would contribute nothing toward the ſalvation of the ſoul. We muſt therefore underſtand our Saviour to mean, that we ſhould cut off, and caſt from us, every occaſion of ſin; though that which is ſo be as dear to us, and as uſeful, as a right eye, or a right hand.

MATT. v. 39.

Our Lord's meaning here is not to be taken ſtrictly according to the letter. It is obſervable, that when he was ſmitten on the face, he did not *turn the other cheek*; which ſhews, that his direction to do ſo, is not to be underſtood in a literal ſenſe. Neither did St. Paul ſo, when the high-prieſt commanded ſome to *ſmite him on the mouth.* Acts xxii. 2. *Reſiſt not evil* does not then forbid us to reſiſt when we are unjuſtly attacked, or oppreſſed; but only, not fully to *avenge ourſelves*, or *return evil for evil.*

MATT. vi. 25.

Jeſus Chriſt cannot be ſuppoſed to countenance idleneſs or negligence, by ſaying, *take*

no

no thought for your life. His deſign in theſe words and what follows, was only to recommend truſt in God's providence; and contentment in our preſent ſituation in life.

MATT. vi. 34.

The meaning of the command, *take no thought for the morrow,* is not that we ſhould live careleſs of what may happen, and make no proviſion for the future; for that is no part of the character of a wiſe and good man. It would be contrary to the Scripture, which requires us to *provide for our houſeholds* as well as our ſouls. Theſe words are likewiſe intended to inſtruct us in the duty of contentment; and to depend upon God for every thing, who is able and willing to give us what is proper for us. We ſhould have no reſtleſs care, anxiety, or diſtraction of thought; for it is added, in St. Luke, *neither be ye of a doubtful mind.*

MATT. viii. 22.

This may ſignify; let others *bury the dead*; thou haſt work of greater conſequence; *follow me.* By *dead* is frequently meant, not only thoſe, who, in a natural ſenſe, are dead; but thoſe likewiſe who in a ſpiritual ſenſe are ſo, by being alienated from the life of God, and *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins.*

MATT. x. 34.

The angel announced the birth of Chriſt, as bringing *peace on earth*: yet he ſays here, he *came not to ſend peace on earth.* He ſpake this, not of the natural conſequence of his doctrines; but what will happen through the perverſe will of men. Though all his exhortations tend to promote love and peace; yet through men's ignorance and wickedneſs will be great variance and diſcord, even between neareſt relations.

MATT. xii. 42.

Sheba, or *Saba*, is a province of Arabia the Happy, lying to the ſouth of Judea, and on the extreme part of the main land; and being bounded by the ſea, is therefore ſaid to be *the utmoſt part of the earth.*

MATT. xix. 26.

The word *impoſſible*, is to be underſtood only as *extremely difficult*; for ſo it is explained Luke xviii. 24. *How hardly ſhall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!* and in both theſe places, to be rich rather ſignifies to rely upon riches more than God; as it is expreſſed in Mark x. 24. *How hard it is for them that truſt in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!*

MATT. xxi. 21.

Interpreters differ in their opinions on theſe words; *ye ſhall ſay unto this mountain*, &c. Some think that Chriſt ſpake them as he paſſed over ſome mountain, in his way from Bethany to Jeruſalem. Others ſuppoſe they relate to the Lunatic Devil, who was mentioned to Chriſt. Others ſay, that to be a *remover of mountains* was a common proverb among the Jews, to ſignify a doctor that was dextrous in ſolving difficult queſtions. Chriſt certainly meant that his diſciples ſhould be able to do the moſt difficult thing in ſupport of his religion, ſo long as the neceſſity of the times required it.

MATT. xxiii. 9.

Call no man your father upon earth, muſt ſeem a ſtrange command to thoſe who do not conſider the former part of the chapter; which is ſpent in ſhewing the pride of the Phariſees. This appeared by their claiming every ſuperiority; as *the chief ſeats*; and to be *called of men Rabbi*, and Father. Theſe were honourable titles; and ſignified doctor, guide, or head of a party. That this pride might not infect the diſciples of Chriſt, he forbade them to be called *Rabbi or Maſter:* but this does not in the leaſt imply, that a man, who has a ſervant or children, ſhould not be called maſter or father.

Mark vi. 4.

When it is ſaid that *Jeſus could do no mighty works* at Nazareth; it is not meant that he had *not power* to do them; but that he *did not*, or *would not* do them: becauſe the people with whom he then was, were not qualified with any good diſpoſitions to make a right uſe of them. The ſame expreſſion is uſed in ſeveral places of Scripture; as Geneſis xix. 22. God *could not* do any thing to Sodom till Lot had left it. The unkind friend *could* not riſe to lend three loaves. Luke xi. 7. St. Paul *could* not ſpeak unto the Corinthians as unto ſpiritual. 1 Cor. iii. 11. The church of Epheſus *could* not bear them that were evil. Revelations ii. 2. Ignorant perſons take theſe places literally.

Mark xiii. 24. 25.

The ſun ſhall be darkened, and the moon ſhall not give her light: and the ſtars of Heaven ſhall fall &c. It his well known how uſual theſe lofty figures are in all the Eaſtern languages; and that the Jews uſed theſe very phraſes in deſcribing the ruin even of a ſingle family.

Luke vi. 24.

Haſty readers have miſtaken theſe words, *woe unto you that are rich*; by conſidering them ſeparately; and not obſerving their connection with

with verſe 20, *bleſſed be ye poor*, meaning poor in *ſpirit*, not in *purſe:* for of many of them it cannot be ſaid, *yours is the kingdom of Heaven.* The four woes relate to the four bleſſings before mentioned: and there is no more reaſon to think, that a rich man ſhall periſh for being rich, than that the poor ſhall be ſaved only becauſe they are poor. Every rich man, who is willing to forſake all, and follow Chriſt, and is *rich in good works, layeth up for himſelf a good foundation againſt the time to come.* 1 Timothy vi. 19.

Luke viii. 10.

All thoſe paſſages of Scripture where God is repreſented as *blinding* men's *eyes*, *cloſing* their *ears*, and *hardening their hearts*, muſt of neceſſity be figurative expreſſions only, not denoting what God *does*, but what he *may permit.* Theſe words of Chriſt, *that ſeeing they might not ſee; and hearing*, &c. &c. are, with little variation, recorded by all the Evangeliſts, in Acts xxviii. 26. and Romans xi. 8. and are quoted from Iſaiah vi. 9. xliv. 18; but muſt be ſo underſtood as to make this perverſeneſs, not the *act of God, but of men:* which is clearly expreſſed by the Prophet Zechariah, vii. 12. *They ſtopped their ears that they ſhould not hear; yea they made their hearts as an adamant ſtone, leſt they ſhould hear thy law.*

Luke xiv. 12.

Poſitive commands, in Scripture, are often to be underſtood comparatively: as Proverbs viii. 10. *receive my inſtruction and not ſilver*; that is *rather than* ſilver; and in Joel ii. 13. *Rend your hearts, and not your garments*, that is, *rather than* your garments. So here; *call not thy friends nor thy brethern, nor thy rich neighbours*, means only this: be not ſo much concerned to call them, as the poor; or call the poor as well as them. For it can hardly be thought that our Saviour's intent was to forbid all invitations of our neighbours or friends, to dine or ſup with us: but his only meaning is, that we ſhould not invite them with a proſpect of recompence, by being invited again in return; but that we ſhould rather expend our money in charity, to ſuch as are in no condition to make us any recompence.

Luke xiv. 26.

The meaning is not, that a man ſhould *hate his father or his mother*; for certainly our Lord, who commands us to *love our enemies*, would never make it our duty to *hate our parents*; therefore the word muſt neceſſarily be taken in a lower ſenſe; namely, to love or eſteem *leſs*. We muſt not wiſh them ill; but yet be content to loſe them, rather than the favour of God. That this is the meaning of the expreſſion is clear

clear from the like text, Matthew x. 37. *He that loveth father or mother* MORE *than me, is not worthy of me.*

Acts xxvii. 33.

This is not to be underſtood as if they had *eat* NOTHING *for fourteen days together*; but that they had eat *little*; or had no *regular meals*. We ſay to people of weak ſtomachs, you have eat nothing this week or fortnight paſt; that is, neither much, nor regular meals.

Romans vi. 17.

In our language it ſeems ſtrange to ſay, *God be thanked that ye were the ſervants of ſin.* Literally taken, it cannot be ſo. The Jews well underſtood ſentences divided as this is; and took both parties of them together. The whole ſentence ſhould be underſtood thus: *God be thanked that ye,* who *were* once *the ſervants of ſin, have* ſince *obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.*

Galatians iii. 13.

Chriſt was not *accurſed of God* in the ſtrict ſenſe of the word; but by being crucified was, in the eſteem of the Jews, the ſame polluted and abominable thing that by their law all perſons were, that were hanged as malefactors.

HEBREWS vii. 3.

Without father, without mother. Not that Melchiſedeck never had a father or mother; but was without any deſcent or Genealogy; without any regiſter of his anceſtors. His pedigree was loſt or unknown. Of two of the Roman emperors it was ſaid, one was *without mother*; the other had *no father*; that is, they were not known.

TEXTS IMPROPERLY TRANSLATED.

GENESIS iv. 15.

ALL gueſſes concerning the *mark which the Lord ſet upon Cain* muſt be vain and fruitleſs: for the Scripture, properly tranſlated, does not ſay that God ſet any mark upon him; but only that *the Lord ſet a ſign to Cain*; that is, the Lord gave Cain ſome ſign or token, to confirm what

he had promiſed him; namely, that he ſhould not be *killed by every one that found him*; which, the 14th verſe tells us, Cain feared would be the caſe.

Genesis vi. 3.

The word ſhould not be *ſtrive*; but *abide*, or *remain* with man. The meaning of theſe words, *yet his days ſhall be an hundred and twenty years*, is this: that though men provoked God; yet he would allow them an hundred and twenty years more to repent and amend, before he brought the flood upon the earth.

Exodus xi. 2. Exod. xii. 35. 36.

God directs the Iſraelites to *demand* (ſo it ought to be tranſlated, and not *borrow*) of the Egyptians, *jewels of gold*, &c. and at the 36th verſe, inſtead of they *lent* unto them, it may as well be rendered, they *let them have*, or they granted them ſuch things as they aſked. The Egyptians *were afraid of them*, and therefore readily complied with whatever they deſir'd.

Numbers xiv. 30.

Ignorant perſons think this text repreſents God as falſifying his word, and his oaths. The firſt may be eaſily and literally underſtood thus: *Ye* Iſraelites, conſidered as PARTICULAR MEN, *ſhall not come unto the land concerning which*

which I ſware to make you; conſidered as a PEOPLE, *dwell therein*. God's promiſes were made to the ſeed of Abraham; not to certain *perſons*, but to a certain *people*; therefore might be performed at any time while that people ſubſiſted.

NUMBERS xiv. 34.

My breach of promiſe is a harſh tranſlation, not warranted by the Hebrew. Some older tranſlations of the bible have a truer rendering. One; *ye ſhall know what it is when I withdraw my hand*. Another has; *Ye ſhall feel my vengeance*. The Great Bible of 1539, *Ye ſhall know my diſpleaſure*. The Geneva tranſlators firſt ventured to ſay; *Ye ſhall feel my breach of promiſe*. The truth is; the word *promiſe* was inſerted by the tranſlators, only to fill up the ſenſe, as they ſuppoſed. There is nothing in the Hebrew to anſwer it. The moſt that can be made of it is this: *ye ſhall know my breach*; which may ſignify, either God's breaking-in upon them in anger; or his breaking with them, that is, departing from them. It is not certain that the Hebrew word does ſignify *breach*. It is found but once more in the Bible, viz. Job xxxiii. 10. where it is rendered *occaſions*, as much by gueſs as in this place.

NUMBERS xxiv. 17.

Shall BEAR RULE *over all the children of Seth*; not *deſtroy*, as in our tranſlation. For if the Meſſiah

Meſſiah were to deſtroy all the ſons of men, where would his ſceptre be?

JUDGES v. 14.

The tranſlators ſeem to have miſtaken the ſenſe of the verſe. They that *handle the pen of the writer*, have but little to do in the battle. The word here tranſlated *the pen*, in every other place of Scripture ſignifies a *ſceptre*: therefore it ſhould be, *out of Zebulon, thoſe that rule* or *lead with the ſceptre.*

JUDGES ix. 13.

Wine is here very improperly ſaid to *cheer both God and man.* It ſhould be *Gods*; that is, the Heroe Gods of the Heathen: for Jotham was ſpeaking to men of an idolatrous city. Or it might be tranſlated, *cheer both high and low, both prince and people*; for the meaning is, all conditions of men find themſelves refreſhed by wine.

1 SAM. ii. 25.

We muſt not ſuppoſe that God ordained Eli's ſons to be wicked, although it is ſaid in the Bible, *they hearkened not unto the voice of their father,* BECAUSE *the Lord would ſlay them.* It ſhould be tranſlated *wherefore* the Lord would ſlay them, that is, becauſe they hearkened not unto the voice of their father.

1 SAM. vi. 19.

Not *fifty thouſand and threeſcore and ten men*, as our tranſlation ſays; but ſeventy men, out of fifty thouſand. Joſephus mentions only ſeventy Bethſhemites as puniſhed on this occaſion. ANTIQ. vi. 2.

2 SAM. xxiv. 11.

Here is a great miſtake in putting the word *for*, inſtead of *and*; becauſe it makes David's repentance to be the effect of God's threatening to puniſh him for numbering the people; when in truth, it was his own conſcience ſmote him for it: we are told, in the foregoing verſe, before the prophet Gad came to him, *David's heart ſmote him*.

1 KINGS ii. 9.

King David has been reflected upon for his dying charge to Solomon reſpecting Shimei, whom he had before pardoned under an oath. But it ſhould be conſidered, that though *David* was bound by his oath not to kill him, *Solomon* was at liberty to chaſtiſe the inſult offered to his father. Shimei *curſing David* was contrary to the expreſs law of God, Exod. xxii. 28. David might forgive the affront done to himſelf; though he might not pardon the ſin againſt God. This ſufficiently juſtifies David, even ſuppoſing the text to be rightly tranſlated; which it is not:

not: for the Hebrew word ſhould be read disjunctively, as it is in theſe words; *give me neither poverty nor riches:* and, if it were rightly tranſlated, the whole would ſtand thus: *now therefore neither hold him guiltleſs, for thou art a wiſe man; nor his hoar head bring thou down to the grave with blood.* The advice in this ſenſe is full of wiſdom and humanity: and Solomon underſtood it in this ſenſe, and no other. Solomon confined Shimei to Jeruſalem for life, *under pain of death*, verſe 37. and afterwards put him to death for tranſgreſſing that command, verſe 42. 46.

2 Chron. xxii. 2.

There muſt be ſome miſtake in the text, which ſays that *Ahaziah was* forty-two *years old when he began to reign*; not only becauſe it contradicts 2 Kings viii. 26. which as plainly ſays he was *twenty-two*; but it makes him older than his father, who was but *forty* years old when he died; as appears from the laſt verſe of the 21ſt chapter. It is reaſonable to think an error has crept into the Hebrew by the careleſſneſs of a tranſcriber, who has miſtaken the Hebrew letters, which ſtand likewiſe for numbers.

Psalm vii. 12.

In the Hebrew with points it is, *God is angry every day.* In the Greek it is, *does not bring on anger*; or *is not angry every day.* Pointing the word

word one way, it means *God*; pointing it another way, it means *not*.

Proverbs xix. 18.

Some cruel parents obſerve no bounds in correcting their children; encouraged thereto, as they ſuppoſe, from the latter part of this verſe, which, properly expreſſed, recommends *moderation* therein, and ſhould be read, *ſuffer not thyſelf to be tranſported to cauſe him to die*; or, more exactly, *to his death lift not up thy ſoul.*

Isaiah i. 18.

There is no doubt but that God often condeſcends to reaſon with men. There is no need to heap text upon text to prove what nobody denies; that God would have us make a right uſe of our reaſon. But this text, in the original, ſays no ſuch thing. A learned perſon tranſlates theſe words thus; *come now and let us be corrected, for the Lord ſays.*

Isaiah xiv. 22.

The ſon and the nephew. It ſhould be, the ſon and the *grandſon.* In Geneſis xxi. 23, it is ſo tranſlated: and the ſame in Job. xviii. 19.

Isaiah xxviii. 4.

While it is yet IN HIS HAND *he eateth it up.* The original word ſignifies, *on its bough*; and

ſhould be ſo rendered, and not, *in his hand.* The Greek renders it, *before he takes it in his hand*; that is, while it is yet on the bough.

Isaiah xliv. 18.

He hath ſhut their eyes, that they cannot ſee. This ought to be tranſlated *they have ſhut*, or rather daubed their eyes.

Jeremiah xx. 7.

Our tranſlation here is harſh and faulty. *Lord, thou haſt deceived me.* The Prophet meeting with an ill return for the diſcharge of his office, appeals to God that it was not his own ambition that led him to it; but only, obedience to God's commands; therefore he ſays, *thou haſt over-perſuaded me, and I was over-perſuaded.* This better expreſſes the Prophet's great modeſty and humility.

Ezek. xiii. 18.

Woe to the women that ſew pillows to all elbows; it ſhould be, and not *arm-holes*; alluding to the ancient manner of eating, which was to lay at table, leaning upon their elbows. The ſoft and effeminate had delicate pillows to lean on; and the ſenſe of the verſe is this: Woe be to the women that propheſy out of their own heart; that contrive all manner of ways for indulgence, and ſuit their doctrine to the tempers of all men, by lying to them; ſo *ſtrengthening*

ening the hands of the wicked, by promiſing him life, verſe 22.

EZEK. xxxiii. 30.

It ſhould not be, *ſpeaking* AGAINST *thee*; becauſe it appears from the next verſe, that they loved Ezekiel well: *with their mouth they ſhew much love.* It ought to be, ſpeak *about* thee, or *of* thee. So it is Pſalms lxxxvii. 2; *glorious things are ſpoken* OF *thee, thou city of God.*

DANIEL iii. 25.

It was wrong to tranſlate this, *like* THE *Son of God*; it ought to have been, like *a* Son of God; or *an Angel*: becauſe it cannot be thought that Nebuchadnezzar, who was an idolater, ſhould know any thing of the Son of God, or Jeſus Chriſt; much leſs, of his form or likeneſs. Angels are often called Sons or God. That Nebuchadnezzar thought him an Angel is plain from verſe 38.

MATT. xvi. 22, 23.

St. Peter's words, *be it far from thee, Lord,* in the Greek ſignify, *favour thyſelf, Lord*; or *be propitious or kind to thyſelf:* that is, avoid the danger by keeping at a diſtance, and conſult thy ſafety by continuing here. Theſe words argued great weakneſs in St. Peter in contradicting Chriſt. Our Saviour's anſwer likewiſe, which in the next verſe ſeems harſh, means only this: I told thee I muſt ſuffer; and therefore all advice

advice to the contrary is ſo far from pleaſing me, that it is *an offence to me:* and *thou art an adverſary* to me.

MATT. XX. 23.

Words are ſometimes added by the tranſlators, to make up the ſenſe, as they ſuppoſe; but very improperly: as here; the words, *it ſhall be given*, take away from Chriſt a power, which the original text allows him. It is truly this: *to ſit on my right hand and on my left, is not mine to give, but to them*, or unleſs to them, *for whom it is prepared of my Father.* He elſewhere promiſes to beſtow this reward in his own right. *To him that overcometh, will I grant to ſit with me in my throne, even as I alſo overcame, and am ſet down with my Father in his throne.* Revel. iii. 21.

LUKE xiii. 33.

Not *a* Prophet; but *the* Prophet; that is, the Chriſt: for it is not true that no Prophet ever *periſhed out of Jeruſalem.*

JOHN ii. 4.

Woman, what have I to do with thee? This ſeems a very rough and diſreſpectful anſwer. But theſe words are very falſely tranſlated. The literal tranſlation is, *what to me and thee?* As if Chriſt had ſaid; let them take care of it to whom it properly belongs; we are only gueſts and ſtrangers.

JOHN v. 4.

Our tranſlation ſays; *at a certain ſeaſon.* It ſhould be, at *the* ſeaſon, that is, at the Paſſover.

JOHN vii. 34.

Where I am, ought certainly to be, *where I go*; as the ſenſe of the verſe requires. The fault ſeems not ſo much the tranſlator's as the tranſcriber's, who might eaſily miſtake the Greek word.

JOHN vii. 52.

It ſhould be, *ariſeth not* the *prophet*; and not, *ariſeth no prophet*, as our tranſlation expreſſes it: for the prophet *Jonah* was of *Gath-Hepher* in in this very country, 2 Kings xiv. 25. *Nahum* alſo was of Galilee. But that the Meſſiah was not to come out of Galilee, the Jews all knew very well.

JOHN xiv. 26.

The word ſeems very improperly to be rendered *Comforter*, which is uſed in none of the antient verſions. The vulgar Latin, and the Greek, retain the word itſelf *(Paraclete)* without tranſlating it. It ſignifies an advocate or patron in a cauſe; but is no where put for *Comforter*. The word from whence it is derived ſignifies to encourage or adviſe; and that ſenſe of

of the word expreſſes more truly the work and office of the Holy Spirit in this place.

Acts ii. 46.

In the margin of the Bible it is more properly, *at home*; and not *from houſe to houſe*. The meaning is, that when the Apoſtles had performed their daily devotions in the temple, they uſed to return home, to a ſort of chapel in a private houſe (ſuch as are now in uſe in the houſes of noblemen and other private Chriſtians), to *break bread*, that is, to receive the ſacrament. It was uſually an *upper room*, Acts i. 13. which is here and elſewhere called the *houſe*.

Acts x. 20.

Doubting nothing, is very far from a right tranſlation. It ſhould be *making no diſtinction*, or difference, that is, between Jew and Gentile; as God had juſt before ſhewed St. Peter by a viſion, and explained it in theſe words, *what God hath cleanſed, that call not thou common*, or unclean: meaning, that the Gentiles were no longer to be conſidered as more unclean than the Jews.

Acts xiv. 15.

The Apoſtle's expreſſion, *men of like paſſions with you*, is much miſunderſtood through an improper tranſlation: for St. Paul and Barnabas

meant not to ſay *paſſions*, in the ſame ſenſe that we uſe the word; but only, that they were men of *like infirmities*, that is, mortal men, ſubject to diſeaſes, caſualties, and death, and therefore not to be worſhiped as Gods.

ACTS xvi. 12.

The *firſt* city in that part of Macedonia. Not *the chief*, as in our tranſlation, or moſt principal city; but the firſt that you come at, on that part or diviſion of Macedonia.

ACTS xxi. 20.

Thouſands ſhould in this place be *myriads*; but the former word being beſt underſtood, was probably choſen for that reaſon.

ROMANS v. 6.

In the text it ſhould not be, *in due time*, but *at the time*; that is, at that time, namely, the time of our being *without ſtrength, Chriſt died for the ungodly*.

1 COR. iii. 15.

Yet ſo as by fire, is quite a wrong tranſlation. It ſhould be, *yet ſo as out of the fire*.

2 COR. xi. 26.

It ought not to be, *in perils in the wilderneſs*, but, in perils in the *country*; for ſo the word ſignifies

ſignifies very often. It is here oppoſed to the *city*. We read of no woods or wilderneſſes that St. Paul ſuffered in.

GAL. iv. 12.

I am as ye are. This certainly ought to be, I *was* as ye are; that is, I was once as zealous for the law of Moſes, as ye are now.

TITUS i. 12.

Not *ſlow bellies*, but *ſwift*, eager, bellies.

JAMES ii. 23.

In the Greek of this text the word is not, *imputed*, but, *computed*; conſidered, accounted, reckoned. The true interpretation is, Abraham put his confidence in God, and for this he was accounted a good and juſt man, and was called *the friend of God.*

1 PETER iii. 19. 20.

By which he went and preached. Not that Chriſt himſelf preached to them, but preached by the Spirit, that is, by ſending the Spirit upon Noah. At the 20th verſe, *ſaved by water*, is an improper tranſlation. It is, *out of*, or *from*, the water.

1 PETER v. 12.

After ſaying, *a faithful brother*; to add, *as I ſuppoſe*; ſeems, to a great many, to imply ſome doubt of the fidelity of Sylvanus. The word however, which we tranſlate *ſuppoſe*, does not ſignify I conjecture, or I gueſs; nor does it imply any doubting; but rather, *I conclude.* It expreſſes a full and firm purſuaſion of a thing; and is ſo uſed in Romans iii. 28. and viii. 18.

TEXTS BETTER TRANSLATED OTHERWISE.

GEN. XV. 7. EXOD. vi. 3.

GOD declares to Moſes, that He *was not known to Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, by his name Jehovah*: yet he ſays expreſsly to Abraham; *I am the Lord*; in the Hebrew it is, *Jehovah.*

vah. Abraham alſo *called a place Jehovah Jireh.* Gen. 22. 14. It ſhould therefore rather be, *was I not known to Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob, by my name Jehovah?* for Moſes obſerves, that *men began to call on the name of Jehovah* even ſo early as in the days of *Seth.* Gen. iv. 26.

Exod. iv. 25.

Some wonder at theſe words of Zipporah to her ſon; *a bloody huſband art thou to me,* which were ſpoken to *him*; and not to her *huſband,* as is often ſuppoſed. They are ill expreſſed in the Engliſh; but in the original, are the very words ſolemnly uſed at the ſacrament of circumciſion; and well known to Zipporah, who had another child circumciſed before this. It was in effect to ſay; by me thou art eſpouſed to the Church of God, by the blood of circumciſion.

Exod. xvi. 15.

It has been demanded, how could the children of Iſrael call it *manna,* if *they knew not what it was*: ſome have thought the expreſſion was occaſioned by contracting into one, the two ſyllables of the word *manna*; which ſignifies *what is it?* Therefore they tranſlate the verſe thus: *they ſaid one to another, what is it? for they wiſt not what it was.* Yet may the common tranſlation be well allowed: for the Hebrew word, if one ſyllable, ſignifies *meat prepared*

pared without trouble: and the verſe may properly enough be read thus: *they ſaid one to another, it is manna* (or meat prepared without trouble), *for they wiſt not what it was.*

NUMBERS xxi. 2, 3.

The true reading is; *I will* DEVOTE *their cities*; that is, to deſtruction: and at the 3d verſe, inſtead of *they utterly deſtroyed them*; it ſhould be, they *accurſed them*, or devoted them to deſtruction.

DEUT. xxxiii. 25.

Our tranſlators have made it appear an odd kind of bleſſing, which God gives the tribe of *Aſher: thy ſhoes ſhall be iron and braſs; and as thy days ſo ſhall thy ſtrength be.* The Hebrew word for *ſhoe*, ſignifies a *bolt* or *bar:* and that which is put for *ſtrength*, equally denotes *peace*, or *reſt.* It would be better expreſſed thus; *thy bolts ſhall be of iron and braſs; and thou ſhalt have peace in thy days.*

JOSHUA ii. 1. HEB. xi. 31. JAMES ii. 25.

Rahab is uſually called *an harlot*; but the Hebrew word as truly ſignifies *an hoſteſs*, or *miſtreſs of an inn.* In this better ſenſe ſome tranſlators have uſed it. It is but charity to think the beſt of a perſon, ranked by the Apoſtles with Abraham, and other good perſons; and propounded as an example of faith and good works.

JUDGES

JUDGES i. 19.

By the words of our Bible, it ſeems as if the Iſraelites were not able with God's aſſiſtance to to drive out the Canaanites. But the truth is, they were able, and might have deſtroyed them; but they were ſlothful or faint-hearted; or had ſelfiſh, corrupt views of their own. The words, *could not*, are not in the Hebrew; which literally tranſlated is no more than this: *he* (Judah) *drove out thoſe of the mountains; but—not drive out the inhabitants of the vally.* Some word is wanting. It might have been, *durſt* not; *would* not; *did* not; if the tranſlators had ſo pleaſed. We may reaſonably fill up the blank thus; *he proceeded not to drive out.* This anſwers all difficulties, and makes the ſenſe compleat. It was Judah's fault that he was terrified with the iron chariots, and durſt not proceed to attack the innabitants of the valley.

JUDGES xi. 40.

The margin of our Bible reads, *talk with the daughter of Jeptha* inſtead of *lament*; and if this be the true reading, it ſhews that ſhe was *not ſacrificed*; but was ſtill alive.

JUDGES xv. 4.

A learned writer ſays, the word, tranſlated *foxes*, ought to be *ſheaves*; and that the word, which we tranſlate *tail*, ſignifies the *extremity* of

any thing. So that the meaning is, that Samſon ſet three hundred ſhocks of corn on fire, by laying two ſheaves between every two ſhocks, to communicate the fire.

1 Sam. xxxi. 3.

What we render, *wounded of the archers*, the moſt learned critics interpret *frighted extremely*: which confirms the opinion that Saul killed himſelf through fear: the Amalekite only pretended to have killed him, 2 Samuel i. 10. in hopes of a reward from King David.

2 Kings v. 18.

It has been proved, that the true tranſlation of the verſe ſhould be; *In this thing, the Lord pardon thy ſervant; that when my maſter* WENT *into the houſe of Rimmon to worſhip there; and he* LEANED *upon my hand; and I* BOWED *myſelf in the houſe of Rimmon; in that I* HAVE WORSHIPPED *in the houſe of Rimmon; the Lord pardon thy ſervant in this thing. And he ſaid, go in peace:* that is, God will accept thy repentance. Do as you have reſolved: declare publickly that you will worſhip no God but the Lord; and the Lord will pardon you. No mention is made of Naaman after this: ſo that he probably was diſmiſſed, becauſe he would not worſhip the Idol any longer.

2 Kings

2 KINGS vi. 25.

The word, here tranſlated *dove's dung*, might have been rendered *pulſe*, *peas*, or *vetches*: for the Arabians gave the name of dove's dung, or ſparrow's dung to two ſeveral things; firſt, to a kind of moſs growing on trees, or ſtony ground; ſecondly, to a ſort of peas or pulſe very common in Judea.

1 CHRON. xx. 3.

In our tranſlation it is; *and he cut them with ſaws*. The word *them* is not in the original. The expreſſion might has properly have been, *and they* (that is, the people whom David brought out of the city) *cut with ſaws*. In 2 Samuel xii. 13. the text is; *and he put them under ſaws*, &c. Subjecting men to labour may as properly be expreſſed by putting them under it, as ſubjecting them to tribute is commonly expreſſed by putting them under tribute.

JOB ii. 9.

The Hebrew word rather ſignifies to *bleſs* than to *curſe*; and the vulgar Latin renders it, *bleſs God and die*; which ſeems right: for Job's wife upbraids him in the ſame ſtrain as his friends did. *Doſt thou ſtill retain thy integrity?* Doſt thou ſtill perſiſt in ſaying thou art innocent? *Bleſs God*, that is, by confeſſing the ſecret ſins for which he inflicts thee. In this ſenſe, *give glory to God*, as uſed in Joſhua vii. 19.

PSALM

PSALM lxxxiii. 13.

Make them like unto a WHEEL: or rather *thiſtledown*, or any thing rolled along by the wind. *Stubble before the wind* alludes to the cuſtom of ſome countries, where they fire the ſtubble to improve the ground.

PSALM lxxxiv. 3.

It cannot be thought that a ſparrow or ſwallow would chuſe the *altars* to make their neſts upon; where they would be continually diſturbed. This verſe ſhould rather be; *as the ſparrow had found her houſe, and the ſwallow her neſt, where ſhe hath laid her young*, that is, with the ſame joy that they do; *even ſo ſhould I find thine altars, O Lord of Hoſts, my King and my God!*

PROVERBS xvi. 4.

Here is a ſtrong proof that God has created men to be miſerable, if the Engliſh be right: but there is another and better way of tranſlating this verſe; namely; *God hath made all things ſo that they agree*, or anſwer one another; *and even the wicked agree to, or are fitted for, the day of evil*, or puniſhment.

ISAIAH v. 26.

The word *hiſs* is apt to carry with it a low idea. Beſide, it ſeems not proper, as not anſwering

wering the original word. For whether we ſuppoſe the metaphor taken from a ſhepherd's calling his ſheep, or from a bee-keeper calling his bees, *hiſs* is not the proper expreſſion for either. The general word *call* would fully expreſs the meaning. Our older tranſlations have *call unto them*, in this place. The Geneva tranſlation of 1560 firſt brought in the word *hiſs*.

ISAIAH liii. 4.

The clauſe which we tranſlate, *ſmitten of God, and afflicted*, may be thus rendered: *God himſelf was ſmitten and humbled.* Which words ſhew that the whole chapter is not to be underſtood of a *man*; but of *God himſelf made man*, to bear our ſins. They can relate only to *Jeſus Chriſt*; and clearly prove that *He is God.*

ISAIAH lxiii. 17.

It is objected againſt this text, that theſe words are expreſs, that God *made them to err.* It is allowed to be ſo in the Engliſh: but the tranſlators might have ſaid, *ſuffered us to err*, without injuring the letter; and would have better expreſſed the true ſenſe of the paſſage; which is this: *O Lord, why haſt thou ſo long deſerted us; permitting us all the while to go aſtray from thy commandments.*

JEREMIAH

JEREMIAH xxiii. 36.

The meaning of this verſe is hard to be underſtood from our tranſlation. It ſhould not be, *for every man's word ſhall be his burden*; but, *becauſe every man's word is a burden*, or *ſpeech*: that is, every one who takes it in his head to be a prophet and utter what he pleaſes, as if it came from God; calls it a *burden*; or rather a ſpeech; or word from God. The falſe Prophets never propheſied burdens, or *troubleſome things*, but always *ſmooth things*.

EZEKIEL iv. 1.

A *tile*, and a *ſlate*, are in ſome reſpects the ſame: yet when the Prophet Ezekiel is commanded *to pourtray* or deſcribe *the city of Jeruſalem*; a *ſlate* would be properer to draw it upon than a *tile*, and therefore might have been the word uſed here, and not a *tile*.

MATT. iii. 6.

It has been remarked that the Greek word, which is here tranſlated *in*; is more than an hundred times in the New Teſtament rendered *at*; and, in one hundred and fifty others, is tranſlated *with*. So the ſenſe of the text may be properly enough expreſſed thus: *John did baptiſe* AT *Jordan*; or *with the waters of Jordan*.

MATT.

MATT. ix. 18.

My daughter is *even now dead:* rather; *ſhe is in the laſt extremity*; or ſhe is by this time dead. As Chriſt was going to the Ruler's houſe, a meſſenger came from thence to tell him that his daughter was *dead*; Luke viii. 49, which ſhews that ſhe was not ſo, when the Ruler came to Chriſt; but only in the laſt extremity.

MATT. xii. 36.

By *idle words* we are not to underſtand *uſeleſs* words which ſtand for nothing; but words which offend God. Some old written Teſtaments have a word which ſignifies *evil*, or *wicked*; and ſo it might have been in ours: for our Saviour's diſcourſe was about the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt.

MATT. xxiii. 24.

Although, from theſe words, the ſenſe of the verſe may be underſtood to be, that the Phariſees would ſcrupulouſly obſerve the ſmalleſt things, and neglect the greateſt; or, would ſcruple things of the leaſt moment, but venture freely on the groſſeſt ſins: yet, inſtead of *ſtrain at a gnat*, it would be properer, and more agreeable to the original, to read ſtrain *out* a gnat; which refers to the cuſtom of ſtraining all

liquors, for fear of flies, which the Jews accounted unclean.

Matt. xxvi. 45.

It ſeems ſtrange that our Lord ſhould ſay, *ſleep on now and take your reſt*; and almoſt immediately add, *riſe, let us be going*. If the preſent tranſlation be right, this muſt be a figure of ſpeech called *irony*; whereby one thing is expreſſed, and a contrary one intended, not with a deſign to deceive, but to ſtrengthen; and uſed only to upbraid, or diſapprove. It ſhould rather be, by way of queſtion, *do you ſleep now and take your reſt*, when I am going to be taken and put to death? This reproof agrees well with verſes 40 and 41, and alſo with what follows here.

Mark iii. 21.

The words, *he is beſide himſelf*, ſhould rather be, *he is faint*. So it is Geneſis xlv. 26. and Joſhua ii. 11. and the words, *lay hold on him*, may be applied to the *people*; and the ſenſe of the whole verſe be this: when his friends heard of it, they went out of the houſe where Jeſus was, to ſtop the multitude; and to tell them, that he fainted for want of ſome refreſhment.

Luke i. 63.

Simple perſons demand, how could Zacharias *aſk* for a writing-table, if he were *dumb?*

A better

A better word might indeed have been choſen to expreſs this action; yet is this not ſo very improper: for a perſon may aſk by *ſigns*, as well as *words*.

Luke vi. 12.

Inſtead of, *in prayer to God*, it ſhould rather be, *in a place of prayer to God*; or in an oratory where prayer was uſed to be made. Theſe places were open courts, walled in, and ſet apart for prayer, before the uſe of ſynagogues.

Luke viii. 27.

A man of that country; not, *out of the city*, as we render it; but rather, one who had formerly dwelt there, before he was poſſeſſed with Devils.

Luke xxiv. 25.

It would be much properer, in this place, to read; *O thoughtleſs, inconſiderate men!* than *O fools!*

John ii. 20.

The forty-ſix years had then paſſed ſince the temple was begun; which in nine and a half was fit for divine worſhip. Yet workmen were ſtill continued for carrying on the out-buildings all the time Chriſt was on earth; and for ſome years after. It might be, *forty and ſix years hath this temple been building*. See Ezra, vi. 15.

Acts ii. 47.

The adding a few words unneceſſarily here, gives a wrong turn to the whole: as if thoſe who were added to the church were only ſuch as *were ordained* or *appointed* to be *ſaved*: whereas in the Greek, it is only thus; *the Lord added to the church daily, the ſaved.*

Acts v. 2.

The Engliſh here does not expreſs the ſin of Ananias ſo fully as it might. There was no harm in his *keeping back part*, or *all*, of the money he had ſold his land for, as St. Peter affirms at the fourth verſe; *after it was ſold, was it not in thine own power?* The words expreſs not what the ſenſe implies; namely, that he kept it back *deceitfully*, that is, he attempted to deceive the Holy Spirit, by agreeing with his wife to tell a lye, and ſay, he had ſold it for ſo much, when in truth he had ſold it for *more*, and deceitfully kept back the reſt. An aggravation of his crime was, that by offering the price of his eſtate at the Apoſtles feet, he intimated a right to be maintained out of the public ſtock, as having nothing of his own; when indeed he had money, which he kept back.

Acts xxiv. 25.

It ſhould rather be, of *juſtice, continency*, and of *a judgment to come*: for *Felix* practiſed all cruelty

cruelty and luſt in his government; thinking he might do all wickedneſs without puniſhment. *Druſilla* alſo, leaving her huſband, married *Felix* an Heathen; thus tranſgreſſing the laws of her country. To ſuch perſons St. Paul very properly diſcourſes of juſtice and chaſtity; againſt which they had both ſo highly offended; diſcourſing alſo of a judgment to come, where Felix could not hope to eſcape unpuniſhed. It is no wonder that *Felix trembled:* and that *Druſilla did not*, was an argument of her Jewiſh confidence that ſhe might eſcape by being a daughter of Abraham.

1 CORINTH. vi. 4.

This direction of St. Paul is differently underſtood by learned men. Some take theſe words in a different ſenſe from the common verſion for perſons *beſt* qualified by their wiſdom and authority to take upon them to be judges. Others think the advice is given ironically, as if the buſineſs of arbitrating were a matter of ſuch eaſe, that a perſon of the *meaneſt* capacity in the church was ſufficient enough to do it: and therefore he adds, *I ſpeak this to ſhame you.* Others read the whole verſe thus; *If ye then have controverſies about things pertaining to this life, (namely, before Heathen judges,) ye make them judges who are leaſt eſteemed in the Church.*

1 Corinth. xi. 29.

Damnation, is a word of ſo terrible a ſound, that it might better have been changed for one leſs offenſive; for the original ſignifies only *judgment*, of any kind whatever, whether temporal or eternal. That it here means *temporal* judgments only is plain from verſe 30th; where the evils the Corinthians ſuffered for profaning the Lord's Supper are ſaid to be *ſickneſs* and *death*: the reaſon, given for theſe temporal puniſhments at the 32d verſe, is, *that they might not be condemned in the world to come.*

2 Corinth. v. 3.

Among the places not eaſily underſtood from our tranſlation, is this; *if ſo be that being cloathed, we ſhall not be found naked.* It might with as much propriety be, *If ſo be we be found cloathed, not naked.* According to ſome copies, it is thus: *being uncloathed*, (that is, of this body,) *we ſhall not remain naked*; but have a heavenly one in its room. *If ſo be*, may alſo ſignify *ſince*; *or ſeeing that*; and is ſo rendered in Epheſ. iii. 2.

Galat. v. 17.

This had better been tranſlated, do *not the things that ye would*, than *cannot do*. If we *could* not do what we ought, we ſhould not be blameable; for no man is juſtly blameable for not doing impoſſibilities.

COLOSS. i. 15.

Our Saviour is here called *the firſtborn of every creature*. The word ſignifies the *firſt producer*, as well as the firſt *produced*. This ſeems to be the real meaning from the words immediately following: *for by him were all things created*.

1 TIM. ii. 15.

This may be rendered either, *ſhe ſhall be ſaved in the ſtate of marriage*, or *child-bearing*, as well as in that of *virginity*: or otherwiſe; ſhe ſhall be ſaved *in* or *by* child-bearing; that is, ſhe ſhall go through the pain with ſafety. Or elſe; *her ſoul ſhall be ſaved by child-bearing*; thas is, by Chriſt being born of a woman; whereby the ſame ſex became inſtrumental to man's ſalvation, as was before to his fall and deſtruction.

2 TIM. iii. 16.

All Scripture is given by inſpiration of God. This ſhould rather be, *all Scripture that is of divine inſpiration, is profitable*, &c. &c. for we muſt not imagine that all parts of Scripture are alike inſpired. St. Paul diſtinguiſhes between what was told him of God, and what he declares of himſelf. 1 Cor. vii. 12.

2 PETER ii. 5.

There was no need to call Noah the *eighth perſon*; for there is no word for *perſon* in the original. It might full as well be read, *the eighth preacher of righteouſneſs*. The ſeven were *Adam*, *Abel*, *Seth*, *Enos*, *Enoch*, *Methuſelah*, and *Lamech*; the eighth was *Noah*.

JUDE, verſe 4.

The original does not mean, men *who were before of old, ordained to this condemnation*; but rather, men *of whom it was before written*, or propheſied, *that this ſhould be their condemnation*, or puniſhment. This takes off a ſcandalous reflection upon Providence; as if God ordained or appointed men to ſin; and then condemned them for doing what they could not help.

REVELAT. xiv. 13.

In the office for the burial of the dead it is; *from henceforth bleſſed are the Dead that die in the Lord*. In the Revelations; *from henceforth*, is placed laſt. In both it had better been, *immediately*, or inſtantly: which affords this comfortable doctrine; namely, that the ſouls of thoſe who die in the Lord are received to happineſs immediately upon their departure out of this life; though not into Heaven itſelf, till the end of the world.

TEXTS

TEXTS REQUIRING SOME EXPLANATION.

GENESIS iii. 3.

GOD'S command to Adam and Eve *not to eat of the tree of life, nor to touch it*, may ſeem ſlight and trifling: yet was it very proper for our firſt parents at that time. What elſe could have been commanded them? They could not diſobey their parents; having none to honour. They could have no temptation to commit murder, or adultry, as there were none but them two: nor to cheat, as there were no dealings to occaſion it. The temptation was great. *The tree was good for food; and pleaſant to the eyes; and to be deſired to make one wiſe.*

GEN. iv. 7.

It is often aſked why Cain's ſacrifice was not accepted as well as Abel's; and theſe words of the Almighty given as a reply: *If thou doſt well,*

well, ſhalt thou not be accepted? and if thou doſt not well, ſin lieth at the door: as if Cain was originally an exceeding wicked man. The reaſon will be better underſtood by conſidering the nature of ſacrifices; which were of two ſorts: the one, a ſacrifice of *thankſgiving*; which conſiſted of the fruits of the Earth: the other, a ſacrifice of *atonement for ſin*; which was the offering up a living creature; the life of which God would accept, inſtead of that of the offender. *Abel* brought a ſacrifice of *atonement*; acknowledging himſelf a ſinner. *Cain* brought a ſacrifice *of thankſgiving*; expecting to be accepted without repentance. The God of mercy ſeems to expoſtulate thus with Cain: why art thou ſorrowful? If thou wert ſo righteous as to need no atoning ſacrifice, thou ſhouldeſt be accepted; as thou art not, ſin will lay in the way, till thou haſt removed it by an atoning ſacrifice, or ſin-offering.

GEN. iv. 16, 17.

How could Cain have *a wife, go into another land, and build a city*, when there were no people in the world beſide himſelf, his Father and Mother? the Scripture makes no mention indeed of any other: yet, doubtleſs, there were then many thouſands: becauſe this happened in the 129th year of the world: for Adam was 130 years old, when Seth was born, chap. v. 3. and it is expreſsly ſaid that Seth *was given inſtead of Abel, whom Cain ſlew*, verſe 25.

GEN.

GEN. xi. 3, 4.

There appears no wicked intention in the builders of the tower of Babel. Their deſign was, *to make themſelves a name*, by *building a city and a tower of* brick, where they might conſtantly reſide, inſtead of living in tents and removing as they increaſed; but, for the ſooner peopling of the world, God diſperſed them, *by confounding their language*; *ſo that they left off to build the city*, verſe 8. *The top reaching to Heaven*, is only an Eaſtern way of expreſſing any thing very high. This tower was ſuppoſed to conſiſt of eight ſtories, each leſs and leſs; which if continued would end in a point, not to be built upon.

GEN. xii. 13.

'An ill turn has been given to this verſe; as if Abraham would have Sarah his wife tell a *falſity*, by ſaying that ſhe was *his ſiſter*. This was no more then the truth; for ſhe was *the daughter of his Father Terah* (who had two wives), *but not the daughter of his Mother*. See chapter xx. 12; ſo was his ſiſter by the Father's ſide; and it was not unlawful with the Heathens to marry in ſuch caſes.

GEN. xxvii. 8.

Rebeccah, by her advice, aſſiſted *Jacob* to ſupplant his brother Eſau, in his Father's bleſſing.

ſing. This appears a wicked action: but ſhe remembered the prophecy concerning her two ſons before they were born; Geneſis xxv. 23; though perhaps Iſaac had forgot it, or was unwilling to fulfil it. She therefore by *ſubtilty* prevailed on her huſband to do that *ignorantly*, which he would not do *knowingly*; though it was what God had before ordained.

Gen. xxix. 27.

It is a common miſtake to think that Jacob ſerved Laban *fourteen* years *before* he married Rachael. This aroſe from miſunderſtanding theſe words; *fulfil her week*; as if it had been a week of years, or that the words were ſpoken of *Rachael*; when indeed they related to the marriage week of *Leah*: for ſuch feaſts uſually laſted a week. It appears from the 30th verſe, that Laban gave Rachael to Jacob *firſt*, for the ſervice he ſhould perform in *ſeven years to come*. This is likewiſe plain from hence; Jacob propoſed to depart from Laban, after fourteen years ſervice, verſe 26. 28. and that Rachael had then been ſome years barren; and after that had borne Joſeph, verſe 22; which could not have been, if he had waited fourteen years before he married her.

Gen. xliv. 5.

If this verſe be made one period, without a point after the word *divineth*, it will take off the charge of Joſeph's uſing unlawful practices.

Is

Is not this it in which my Lord drinketh? and whereby indeed he divineth that ye have done evil in ſo doing.

GEN. xlix. 6.

In their anger they ſlew a man. Man is here put for *men*; meaning the Shechemites. See chapter xxxiv. 26. *One* is often in Scripture put for *many*: as Exodus xxiii. 38. the *Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite*; for the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites. *Digged down a wall*, is otherewiſe read, *ſmote a prince*; or *rooted out a chief*; namely, Hamor; or Shechem his ſon; as before.

GEN. l. 3.

We learn from the Greek hiſtorians, that the time of mourning was while the body remained with the embalmers; which was ſeventy days. This explains why *the Egyptians mourned for Iſrael threeſcore and ten days*. During this time, the body lay in ſaltpetre; the uſe of which was to dry up the moiſture: and when in the compaſs of thirty days this was reaſonably well effected, the remaining forty were employed in anointing it with gums and ſpices, to preſerve it; which was the proper embalming. This explains the meaning of the *forty days which were fulfilled for Iſrael, being the days of thoſe that were embalmed.*

EXOD. ii. 11. MATT. iii. 1.

The words, *in thoſe days*, do not always refer to the time that was ſpoken of juſt before: for, in the firſt of theſe texts, there is recorded that which happened almoſt *forty years* after what Moſes had juſt mentioned: and that which is related in the other text was near *thirty years* after what is ſpoken of in the laſt verſe of the ſecond chapter of St. Matthew.

EXOD. ii. 12. ACTS vii. 24.

Moſes, after he had *killed an Egyptian, hid him in the ſand*; which looks as if he thought he had done wrong. This was not the caſe. It is plain from the hiſtory, that he killed him in *defending an innocent man*, who perhaps could not be protected otherwiſe. He likewiſe *ſuppoſed, that his brethren would have underſtood by it, that God intended him for their deliverer* from the Egyptian bondage; but they had no ſuch knowledge of God's deſign. He, perceiving this, *hid the Egyptian and fled*, for fear of Pharaoh, who, when he heard of it, *ſought to ſlay Moſes*, verſe 15.

EXOD. viii. 26.

The meaning of *ſacrificing the abomination of the Egyptians*, is this. The Egyptians worſhiped the ox, and the ſheep, as Gods: and the Iſraelites feared they would fall upon them, when

when they ſaw them kill thoſe beaſts for ſacrifice which they worſhiped as Gods: therefore they deſired to go *three days journey into the wilderneſs, to ſacrifice to the Lord.*

NUMBERS vi. 2.

A *Nazarite*, to obtain greater grace and virtue, did *ſeparate* or conſecrate himſelf, in an eſpecial manner, for a certain time, (as Chriſtians do in Lent, or other days of faſting); during which he was to obſerve certain rules here ſet down, eſpecially the *abſtaining from wine.* It appears from 1 Maccab. iii. 47. 49. that the whole people, or all good men at leaſt, made theſe vows, in order to avert the judgments of God.

NUMBERS xxii. 22.

Why was God *angry with Balaam becauſe he went*, when he himſelf had given him leave to go? He did indeed give him leave; but it was as he gave the Iſraelites a king; *in his anger.* The ſtory ſufficiently ſhews the Prophet's madneſs. He had conſulted God about curſing the people of Iſrael; and had received a full and poſitive anſwer, *thou ſhalt not curſe the people, for they are bleſſed.* After ſo flat and clear a denial, it was rudeneſs and madneſs to come to God a ſecond time upon the ſame errand. But Balaam was covetous: he was ſtaggered at king Balak's ſecond offer; and deſired the meſ-

ſengers

ſengers to ſtay till he could conſult God again. This was wrong; for God had told him that he ſhould not go; who was not a man that he ſhould lie or repent.

Nunbers xxii. 28.

It has been thought ſtrange that Balaam was *not ſurpriſed at the ſpeaking of the aſs.* The Scripture account of this hiſtory is ſo ſhort, as not to ſay either that he was, or was not: we are not therefore to conclude that he was not, but may full as reaſonably ſuppoſe the contrary. Joſephus repreſents him as *greatly aſtoniſhed.* B. 4. C. 6.

Deuteron. xviii. 10.

To *make a child paſs through the fire,* was thought to be a mock-baptiſm, or charm, to preſerve children from a violent death: yet the more common opinion is, that the children were actually burnt to death, *in ſacrifice to Moloch*; drums or tabors beating all the while, to drown their cries: whence the valley was called *Tophet*, from a word ſignifying a drum, or muſical inſtrument.

Joshua x. 12.

The common people now underſtand theſe words, *Sun, ſtand thou ſtill,* in the ſame ſenſe the Iſraelites did formerly: as if the *earth ſtood ſtill,* and the *ſun was moving*, till ſtopt in its courſe by the word of Joſhua. Learned men now deny ſuch motion. It ſignifies little which really moved;

moved; as the effect of the miracle would be the ſame; namely, the day lengthened till *the people had avenged themſelves upon their enemiës.* The Scripture ſpeaks according to the common ſenſe of things, and the general apprehenſions of men; which is ſufficient.

JUDGES xvi. 17.

Sampſon's ſtrength did not lay actually *in his hair*; which was only a ſign or token of it: for he was a *Nazarite appointed of God from his birth*; that is, ſeparated and devoted to the ſervice of God, that he might ſave the Iſraelites. As a token of this, *no razor was to come upon his head*, chapter xiii. 5. By ſuffering his hair to be cut off, he broke the covenant, and forfeited the ſpirit of ſtrength.

1 SAM. xii. 17.

It may ſeem to us nothing extraordinary that there ſhould be *thunder and rain* in harveſt, or in the months of June or July, when this happened: but St. Jerome, who lived in Judea many years, ſays, it never rained there at that ſeaſon. So that the thunder and rain, procured by Samuel, were truly miraculous; and as ſuch *the people greatly feared the Lord, and Samuel.*

1 SAM. xv. 3.

It has been called extreme cruelty in Saul to *ſlay both man and woman; infant and ſuckling;*

camel and aſs: but it ſhould be remembered, that it was God's expreſs command to him by the Prophet Samuel. We ſhould conſider theſe orders, to ſlay the innocent with the guilty, in the ſame light as we do a plague, or an earthquake. God *can*, and certainly *does* reward the innocent with happineſs in another life: and every infant, how much ſoever its death may be lamented by its parents, is *favoured* by dying in its infancy; as it is taken from the miſeries of this life, in order to be made perfectly happy.

1 SAM. xvii. 4.

Goliah's height was *ſix cubits and a ſpan*, that is, according to the loweſt computation, full *nine feet*. Giants are often ſpoken of in Scripture; as Geneſis vi. 4. Numbers xiii. 13; but they are always mentioned as rarities, and wonders of the age; and not common. Some ſuch inſtances have been in all ages; as hiſtory ſhews; which need not be mentioned; for we cannot expect them to be believed by thoſe who do not believe the Scriptures. The ordinary ſize was probably always the ſame; as may appear from the mummies and coffins of the ancient Egyptians, which are to be ſeen at this day.

1 SAM. xvii. 55.

It appears ſtrange to ſome, that neither *Saul* nor *Abner* ſhould remember David. It has been ſaid

ſaid (page 6) that his combat with Goliah might be *before* he was ſent for to refreſh Saul. Yet if we take the hiſtory as it is, and ſuppoſe it *after*, there is no great difficulty in it: for Abner might have been abſent from court during the time that David reſided there. However, *David had been* ſo a year or two; and it is no ſtrange thing to find men forgotten at court in leſs time, who were more conſiderable than David. Perhaps Saul had ſeen him but *once*, and that when he was diſordered in his ſenſes; and now ſeeing him in a ſhepherd's dreſs, might not recollect him. Yet all this is on a ſuppoſition that Saul did not know David's *perſon*; which the Scripture does not ſay. The queſtion is; *whoſe* SON *is this youth?* It was natural for the king to enquire into the *family* of that man to whom he had promiſed to give his daughter in marriage.

1 SAM. xxi. 1. MARK ii. 25. 26.

Two things Chriſt affirms, contrary to what it is in the book of Samuel. Firſt, that *David had men with him, when he entered into the houſe of God*; and, ſecondly, that *Abiather* was high-prieſt; not *Abimelech*. David had indeed company with him; and Ahimelech knew it; ſee verſe 4. The meaning is; David had no guards with him, as perſons of quality uſually had; or he kept them at a diſtance; and Ahimelech did not ſee them. Abiather was the ſon of Ahimelech; and at that time deputy high-prieſt,

to officiate in his ſtead, when the high-prieſt was under any legal defilement: which officer the Jews called the Sagan.

2 Sam. vi. 20.

David could not be *naked*, though accuſed by Michal of *uncovering himſelf as a vain fellow ſhameleſsly*; for he had on a *robe*, and an *Ephod*. 1 Chron. xv. 27. Theſe were prieſtly garments; and particularly cloſe; ſee Exod. xxviii. 32. and xxxix. 23. ſo that no part of the body could be ſeen. He is ſaid to be uncovered in reſpect to his royal robes; which, though richer and handſomer then the prieſts, he refuſed to wear; and choſe to appear in part of the prieſts dreſs.

2 Sam. xii. 30.

The idols of the Heathen were crowned: and this might be a crown of their idol; for it was too heavy for a man; *a talent of Gold* being one hundred and fourteen pounds; of this a crown might be made for king David. Or if we read, *ſet on his head*; it may mean ſet on the top of, or hung in a canopy over, his head. Or it might be ſaid, the value of the crown, *with the precious ſtones, made a talent of gold*; amounting to about five thouſand pounds.

2 SAM. xiv. 26.

Abſalom's hair weighed two hundred ſhekels; perhaps ſo many ſhekels in money; or was worth eleven pounds ſeven ſhillings. If the weight is meant according to the Jewiſh ſhekel, it would amount to three pounds two ounces. It is particularly ſaid, *after the king's weight*; meaning perhaps the king of Babylon's weight; which was then well known to the Jews; and his ſhekel was only one third of theirs.

2 SAM. xix. 29.

Thou and Ziba divide the land. We are ready to blame David for this determination; which ſeems to give Ziba half of the land which he had before given to Mephiboſheth: but a learned perſon hath ſet the matter in a better light; and ſhewn, that in all probability it is the ſame order that he gave, chapter ix. Let Ziba ſtill take care of thy eſtate, as he formerly was ordered to do; and live thou with me at my table.

2 SAM. xxiv. 10.

David's ſin in *numbering the people* conſiſted not only in a vain deſire to know the number and ſtrength of his kingdom; but both he and the people were guilty of a further ſin: for it appears from Exod. xxx. 12. that God had given the Iſraelites a command, that when they

took the number of the people, *every man from twenty years old, and upward, ſhould pay half a ſhekel to the ſanctuary, as a ranſom for his ſoul to God*, under the penalty of a *plague* to enſue on the neglect of ſuch payment. David was guilty of a neglect in not exacting this tribute; which yet could not excuſe the people from paying it, when an expreſs law of God commanded it: and therefore a plague ſoon followed.

1 Kings xviii. 9.

Why ſhould Obadiah fear that *Ahab would ſlay him*, for telling him that Elijah was in ſuch a place? The reaſon is implied in the twelfth verſe; namely, that Obadiah feared the providence of God would direct the Prophet to avoid the ſearch of king Ahab, as he hitherto had done; and that Ahab would put Obadiah to death, for not ſecuring him when he had it in his power.

1 Kings xx. 35, 36.

It may ſeem ſtrange that a prophet ſhould deſire a man *to ſmite him*; and that he ſhould *puniſh him with death for refuſing* to do ſo. It ſhould be conſidered that he, being a Prophet, might expect to be obeyed, eſpecially as the text ſays, it was *declared to be by the word of the Lord*; and therefore a ſecond perſon readily complied. The requeſt ſeems to be, to ſmite him ſo as to wound him; that he might appear to have been in the battle;

battle; without which he could not ſo well have delivered his prophecy to the king.

2 KINGS ii. 23, 24.

The Prophet Eliſha is blamed for *curſing, in the name of the Lord, little children who ſaid to him Go up thou bald-head.* It is not clear that they were ſuch as we call *little children*; but rather *young men,* perhaps of twenty years old or more, who are frequently in Scripture called by that name. *Benjamin* is called a *child,* Geneſis xliv. 20. though he was above thirty years old, and had ten children, Geneſis xlvi. 21. In our old Engliſh language the word *child* means a perſon of ſuch an age. Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abednego, were doubtleſs *men,* when they were *ſet over the affairs of the province of Babylon*; yet what they ſung in the fiery furnace is called, The ſong of the three *children.* The expreſſion of *bald-head* may likewiſe be miſunderſtood; as if thoſe wicked young men mocked the infirmities of old age. It does not appear that Eliſha was at that time an old man. It might be, that he had ſhaved, or made bald his head, as ſome prieſts do; for it is plain they inſulted him becauſe he was one of God's miniſters.

2 KINGS viii. 10.

Go ſay to him, *thou mayeſt certainly recover*; *howbeit the Lord hath ſhewed me that he ſhall ſurely die.* Would the Prophet have Hazael

tell a lie? No. He well knew that the king might have recovered of his illneſs; but that he ſhould die another away, though not of his diſtemper. The truth is, Benhadad might have recovered of his diſorder, had not Hazael murdered him.

2 Kings xviii. 4.

The hiſtorians recording the name which the king gave the brazen ſerpent, after the breaking it in pieces, will appear odd to thoſe who do not conſider, that the Jews had fallen into the Egyptian ſuperſtition of Names. This idol, like others, had doubtleſs its name of honour. Good king Hezekiah therefore, in contempt of its name, or title, called it *Nehuſhtan*, which ſignifies a *thing of braſs*. Others ſay, Nehuſhtan may be rendered *the divining Serpent*, and the whole verſe thus: *he brake the ſerpent of braſs that Moſes made; for unto thoſe days the children of Iſrael did burn incenſe to it; and were calling it Nehuſhtan*, or the divining ſerpent.

1 Chron. ix. 2.

Nethenims; that is, people given to God. Theſe were the Gibeonites, who were given to God, to bring neceſſaries for the ſervice of the altar; not ſlaves, but a kind of ſacred ſervants; being the firſt fruits of the Gentiles.

Esther

ESTHER iii. 2.

It is probable that *Mordecai* refuſed to honour *Haman* on account of the curſe he lay under, as an *Amalekite*; Exodus vii. 14. and 1 Samuel xv. 3. All the Jews probably did the ſame; or the whole nation would have blamed Mordecai's behaviour, which brought them all into ſuch danger.

JOB xix. 25, 26.

They who diſbelieve a reſurrection of the body, are willing to think that Job here ſpeaks only of his *temporal deliverance from his troubles*; and ſay, that the Jews always underſtood him in this ſenſe. The opinion of the Jews is not to be regarded on thoſe paſſages which relate to Jeſus Chriſt, who is here called by his uſual name, the *Redeemer*. There are many proofs of a reſurrection to be found in the Old Teſtament. Other parts even of this hiſtory expreſs Job's belief in this article; as chapter xiv. 12. *Man lieth down, and riſeth not, till the Heavens be no more*: which may imply that, when the Heavens ſhall be no more, he *ſhall* riſe again.

PSALM lxxviii. 25, 26.

Becauſe it is ſaid, *God gave the Iſraelites manna from Heaven*; and *man did eat Angel's food*; ignorant people ſuppoſe the angels eat; and that their food is manna. Inſtead of *Angel's*

gel's food, it might be *food of the ſtrong*; or rather, *ſtrong ſubſtantial food*. Heaven alſo often means the firmament; as when the birds are ſaid to *fly in the open firmament of Heaven*, Geneſis i. 20. and the Clouds are called *the Clouds of Heaven*.

PSALM civ. 25.

Wherein are things creeping innumerable. We know not of ſuch a prodigious quantity of creeping things in the ſea: but it is to be noted, that the Hebrews gave the name of *reptiles*, or creeping things, to all *fiſhes*, which are indeed innumerable. See Habbakuk i. 14, 15.

ISAIAH i. 18.

This expreſſion, *ſins as red as ſcarlet ſhall be white as wool*, refers to the manner of chuſing the *ſcape goat*; which was thus. The high-prieſt took two goats, and ſet one on each ſide of him, having bound on the forehead of both, a piece of ſcarlet cloth. Then the lots were given forth; and the ſcarlet of that which was appointed the ſcape goat changed white as a token of its being approved by God.

ISAIAH xxii. 22.

The cuſtom of *carrying keys on men's ſhoulders* may ſeem very ſtrange to us: but the ancients had their keys made very large, and in form of a ſickle; and the weight and ſhape of them was ſuch that they could not otherwiſe be conveniently

ently carried, but as we ſee our reapers carry their ſickles.

Isaiah lxvi. 3.

God declares that the outward worſhip offered to him by hypocrites and wicked perſons is of no value in his ſight. The ſentence ſhould be filled up thus: *He that killeth an ox*, without the qualifications of ſincerity and humility, mentioned in the ſecond verſe, *is* eſteemed guilty of as great a crime in the ſight of God, *as if he ſlew a man.—As if he cut off a dog's neck* means, in order to ſacrifice it; this animal being greatly abhorred by the Jews.—*As if he bleſſed an Idol*, means, as if he preſented gifts to an Idol, and ſo honoured it.

Jeremiah xvi. 7.

Cup of conſolation to drink for their Father or Mother, relates to an ancient cuſtom of comforting the relations of the dead by a funeral entertainment.

Jeremiah xxxiv. 18.

The manner of making a ſolemn covenant was by *dividing a calf* and *paſſing between the two parts*; implying this: ſo may God cut me in pieces if I break the oath and covenant which I now make. God was pleaſed to condeſcend ſo far, as to give Abraham aſſurance of his pro-

miſe, by *paſſing between the pieces* of his ſacrifice in the form of *fire and ſmoke*. Geneſis xv. 17.

Ezek. xx. 25.

God does not ſay of *his own* ſtatutes or judgments, that they *were not good*; but of the idolatrous ſtatutes, the corrupt principles and practices of the Heathen nations, to which he abandoned and gave up his own people, becauſe they had firſt abandoned and given up him. Or it may be read, *have I given them ſtatutes*, &c. &c.

Ezek. xxiv. 22.

It was the cuſtom of the Jews, on the death of their relations, to ſit for ſome time on the ground without ſhoes, and to provide no food for themſelves; this was preſented to them by ſome friend or neighbour, and called, *the bread of men*. The ſenſe of the verſe therefore is, ye ſhall not cover your faces as mourners do, nor eat of the funeral feaſt prepared for thoſe that mourn.

Ezek. xxx. 2.

Although the common people are the moſt likely to know the meaning of old words; yet there are ſome ſo long diſuſed, as to be almoſt forgotten. Such I take to be this expreſſion, *Wo worth the day*. *Worth* is the old Engliſh word ſignifying *to be*, or *become*. It therefore means, Wo be to the day.

Ezek. xxxii. 27.

Ezekiel, ſpeaking of the honours ſome men ſhould receive at their death, or burial, adds, *but their iniquities ſhall be upon their bones*; which ſeems difficult to underſtand: ſome have therefore rendered it thus; *habitations are given for their bones*, that is, magnificent vaults or ſepulchres: for the Prophet is declaring, that certain perſons ſhould not be honoured at their burials, but be thrown into one pit with the vulgar.

Daniel ix. 27.

The *abomination and deſolation* here ſpoken of, and mentioned by St. Matthew, xxiv. 25. and St. Mark, xiii. 14. ſome underſtand to mean, the Roman army; which was an *abomination*, becauſe of the images of Cæſar, and the eagles, the enſigns of it: alſo a *deſolation*, becauſe it made the temple, the city, and country deſolate. Others think this refers to the ſetting up the image of Jupiter Olympias upon the altar on the 15th of the month Caſleu, and referred to 2 Maccab. vi. 2. This made the temple deſolate; all good men forbearing to come to it while the image was there.

Hosea iv. 2.

Blood toucheth blood. The blood of the ſacrifice, and the blood of the ſacrificer, were

mingled together, when Jehoidas ſon of Zachariah was murdered in the temple; or rather Zacharias ſon of Jehoida or Barachias, which are names of much the ſame ſignification.

MATT. iii. 4.

There has been much diſpute concerning what is to be meant by *Locuſts*. Some underſtand it of fowls, herbs, and wild peaſe. But it is to be noted that Locuſts, in the common ſenſe of the word, were creatures which the law looked upon as *clean*, Levit. xi. 22. Pliny ſays they made a conſiderable part of the food of the Parthians and Ethiopians. Dr. Shaw ſays, that when dried, and ſprinkled with ſalt, they taſte much like the river cray-fiſh.

MATT. vi. 30.

Our countrymen have but little notion of *graſs being caſt into an oven:* yet, in the Eaſt, fuel is ſo ſcarce, that they uſe the ſtalks of herbs and graſs for firing.

MATT. viii. 4.

Our Saviour having cured a Leper, bid him *tell no man*, meaning, that he was healed by him, *till he had ſhewn himſelf to the prieſt, and offered the gift that Moſes commanded*; and the prieſt, by accepting it, had acknowledged him clean from his leproſy. The reaſon of this was, leſt the prieſts, if they had known the man had been

been cleanſed by Chriſt, ſhould, out of envy to him, refuſe to own that he was cleanſed. This ſenſe theſe words require; *offer a gift for a teſtimony unto them*, or rather, a teſtimony *againſt* them, if they ſhould afterward deny that he was healed.

Matt. viii. 31.

There is no objection reaſonably to be made againſt our Lord's ſuffering the *Devils to enter into the herd of ſwine:* for that the owners of them were very covetous, and deſerved greater puniſhment, is plain from their deſiring our Lord *to depart out of their coaſts*; which ſhews that they valued their ſwine more than their ſouls: and why ſhould it be thought more unjuſt to puniſh them in this manner, than it would be to puniſh any perſon in body, goods, or eſtate? This is the only puniſhment our Saviour inflicted on any perſon which affected his property.

Matt. ix. 17.

There ſeems little reaſon to imagine, that *new wine* would injure *old bottles*, ſuch as ours are, though we ſhould ſuppoſe them, as the text undoubtedly does, to be made of *leather*. It rather means the raw ſkins of beaſts newly killed, which are to this day uſed in ſome countries to hold new wine, and afford a ſubſtance for the vinous ſpirit to prey upon.

MATT. xii. 2.

Thy Diſciples do that which is not lawful, that is, not, as ſome think, unlawful to *pluck and eat the ears of corn*, for that was lawful; ſee Deut. xxiii. 25. but it was unlawful to eat on the Sabbath before the morning ſervice was over: for the Jews faſted till that was ended.

MATT. xii. 5.

It is not meant that the prieſts in the temple *profaned the Sabbaths* WICKEDLY: but only, that they did ſuch things in the temple, for the uſe of its ſervice, as in other perſons, and on other occaſions, would profane the Sabbath; ſuch as carrying wood, lighting the fires, and ſlaying the ſacrifices, on that day.

MATT. xiii. 16.

The perſons ſent to aſk Chriſt this queſtion, *Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæſar or not?* were men of different opinions; namely, the Phariſees, and the Herodians, who thought to bring him into danger, which way ſoever he ſhould anſwer. If he ſhould anſwer *no*; the Herodians were ready to accuſe him as an enemy to Cæſar. Had he anſwered *yes*; the Phariſees were as ready to accuſe him to the people as an enemy to their rights in promoting the paying of taxes.

MATT.

MATT. xiii. 32.

The Jews give a wonderful account of the growth of *muſtard-ſeed*. There was a ſtock of muſtard-ſeed in Sichin, from which ſprang out three boughs; one of which was broken off, and covered the tent of a potter, and produced three cabs of muſtard. *R. Simeon, B. Calipha* ſays, "A ſtalk of muſtard-ſeed was in my field, into which I was wont to climb, as men do into a fig-tree."

MATT. xv. 5. MARK. vii. 11.

The gift on the altar was in Hebrew called *Corban*; and was one of thoſe oaths which the Scribes and Phariſees accounted principally binding. *If any ſwore by the altar, it was nothing: but if by the gift upon the altar, he was bound to perform.* Matthew xxiii. 18. If the Jews ſwore by the oath Corban that they would not relieve any one, even either Father or Mother (which they frequently and uncharitably did) they thought that by religiouſly keeping their oath, they were diſcharged from their duty to their parents; thus making the fifth Commandment *of no effect*.

MATT. xvi. 28.

Some imagine that theſe words relate to the great and terrible day of judgement, becauſe it is ſaid in the verſe before, that *Chriſt will re-*

ward every man according to his works. But there were none of that company, who were not to die, or *taſte of death*, long before that great and terrible day of the Lord: therefore others conclude, that this *coming of Chriſt in his kingdom* relates to another event; namely, the deſtruction of the Jewiſh Church and Nation; wherein our Lord may properly enough be ſaid to *come in the glory of his Father*; and with his Angels reward the Jews and Chriſtians accorcording to their works; the Jews by deſtroying them; and the Chriſtians by preſerving them. This happened about forty years after our Lord's death, when ſome of the company might be alive; and St. John the Evangeliſt certainly was ſo.

MATT. xvii. 24.

Every Jew that was twenty years old was obliged to pay every year *half a ſhekel* or two drams (about fifteen pence of our money), for the uſe of the ſanctuary; or to buy ſacrifices and other things for the ſervice of the temple. See Exodus xxx. 13. and Numbers x. 32. That this was the tribute the collectors demanded, and not any tax payable to the Roman emperor, is plain; not only from our Saviour's argument, viz. that He was the Son of that Heavenly King to whom it was paid, and ſo had a right to be excuſed; but from the word which is here rendered *tribute money*, or half ſhekel, which was the proper word for the tax, which was paid to

the

the temple: whereas the tribute paid to Cæſar was a Roman penny, and would have been gathered by the uſual officers, the publicans, not by the perſons who are here called (as by a title well known) the receivers of the half ſhekel. The reaſon why our Lord paid only for himſelf and St. Peter was, becauſe they only lived at Capernaum. The other Apoſtles were to pay it in their proper places.

MATT. xviii. 17.

This difficult text has many interpretations. This ſeems the beſt. The Jews were ſubject to the Romans; who permitted men to judge between man and man, according to the law of Moſes, in private matters only, but reſerved all great cauſes to be heard in the Roman court. In private quarrels our Saviour propoſed three ways of proceeding. Firſt, *If thy brother treſpaſs againſt thee, tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he will not hear thee, take two or three witneſſes.* Verſe 15. 16. Secondly, *if he will not hear them*, bring him before the Jewiſh magiſtrate, or eccleſiaſtical court; *tell it to the Church.* Thirdly, *if he neglect to hear the Church*, take your remedy at the Roman court; *let him be unto thee as an Heathen.*

MATT. xxiii. 5.

Phylacteries were certain long and narrow pieces of parchment, whereon were written ſeveral

paſſages of the law. Theſe the Jews tied to their foreheads and left arms, in memory of the law. The word ſignifies *to keep, or preſerve.* The particular paſſages were theſe; Exodus xiii. 3, to verſe 10. Exodus xiii. 11. to verſe 16. Deut. vi. 4. to verſe 9. and Deut. xi. 13. to verſe 21.

MATT. xxiv. 28. LUKE xvii. 37.

Whereſoever the body or carcaſe is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Theſe words ſeem borrowed from the Book of Job; who ſpeaks of the eagle on this manner. *She dwelleth and abideth on the rock, and the ſtrong place; from whence ſhe ſeeketh the prey, and her eyes behold afar off. Her young ones alſo ſuck up blood; and where the ſlain are, there is ſhe.* Job xxxix. 28. The Romans made the eagle their enſign in war: and therefore our Saviour, by this expreſſion, gives us to underſtand, that the Romans would come upon the Jews with a ſudden deſtruction; as they did ſome years after.

MATT. xxvi. 15.

A piece of ſilver is ſuppoſed to mean, in this place, a ſhekel of the value of about two ſhillings and ſixpence: therefore, *thirty* ſuch *pieces* amount to three pounds fifteen ſhillings. This was alſo the price of a ſlave. See Exodus xxi. 32.

MATT.

Matt. xxvii. 9.

What St. Matthew ſays is *ſpoken by Jeremy the prophet* is not to be found in the prophecy of Jeremiah: but there is at leaſt the ſubſtance of it in Zechar. xi. 13. Some ſuppoſe Zechariah had two names; as *Joſeph* is called *Heli*; ſo St. Matthew might call him by either. Others think this prophecy was ſpoken by Jeremiah, though not by him committed to writing. We find, in the ſecond chapter of the ſecond Book of Maccabees, many words ſpoken of Jeremiah, which are not in the book of his prophecy. Why may not theſe have been ſpoken by him and kept in memory, or ſome writing, till the time of Zachary; of whom it is obſervable, that he loved to uſe theſe words of Jeremiah. It is probable that Jeremiah wrote the 9th, 10th, and 11th chapters of Zechariah: in which laſt chapter theſe words are. There are yet others who ſuppoſe, that as the Jews placed Jeremiah firſt in the liſts of prophets, the book of the prophets might be called the book of Jeremiah.

Mark xiv. 25.

The kingdom of God means here, as in many other places, *the Goſpel*, or *Chriſtian Religion*, which began to be eſtabliſhed after Chriſt's reſurrection: and by *drinking wine new in it*, is meant, the applying it to a new purpoſe, as a

ſacrament, in remembrance of his blood ſhed for us.

MARK xiv. 58.

The witneſſes affirmed that Jeſus Chriſt ſaid, *I will deſtroy this temple* MADE WITH HANDS. The addition of theſe laſt words ſhews their falſe teſtimony: for it reſtrains Chriſt's words to the temple of Jeruſalem, which might otherwiſe be underſtood of his body, which indeed he meant. Beſides, Chriſt ſaid not, *I will deſtroy*; but *deſtroy*, or *do you deſtroy this temple, and in three days I will raiſe it up.*

LUKE i. 69.

Among the Jews, a *horn* ſignified *power*. *A horn of ſalvation* therefore means, *a powerful Saviour.*

LUKE ii. 1. 2.

In the firſt verſe, by *taxing*, is only meant *inrolling*; when a ſurvey was made, and all perſons, poſſeſſions, and eſtates, enrolled. The real payment of taxes was ſome years after; for no taxes were levied or made, as the ſecond verſe informs us, till *Cyrenius was governor of Syria*, about twelve years after the firſt ſurvey or inrolling.

Luke ii. 43.

Curious people enquire why Chriſt *privately left his Parents, and returned to Jeruſalem.* Thoſe who are learned in the cuſtoms of the Jewiſh Church ſay, that till a child was twelve years old he was not obliged to go up to the Feaſt of the Paſſover; and that their youth were uſually thirteen before they were brought to the maſters of the ſynagogue, to give an account of their religion; like the Chriſtian ceremony of *Confirmation.* Yet the capacities of children being different, ſome appeared earlier than others. Our Saviour might offer himſelf a year before the uſual time. This accounts for his being *found in* one of the rooms belonging to *the temple*; where the doctors of the law uſed to meet, not only to reſolve queſtions, but alſo to *confirm* ſuch of their youth as they found qualified for that ceremony, which was performed with prayer and ſolemn bleſſing.

Luke vi. 35.

The command to *lend, hoping for nothing again,* muſt be explained by the verſe before it; where our Saviour recommends to his followers, to be more kind and loving than the Heathen, or ſinners, who would do good and lend only to them *from whom they hoped to receive as much again.* Chriſt teaches us a more perfect charity: and to be merciful and lend, even where we

cannot expect the like kindneſs for ourſelves another time.

LUKE XIX. 2.

The *Publicans* were *collectors*, or elſe *farmers* of thoſe taxes which the Romans laid upon the Jews. They were frequently covetous perſons, and exacted more than was right, and for that reaſon hated by the Jews; though they were perſons of rank and character among the Romans. Of theſe officers, ſome were to overſee others who were accountable to them. Such was *Zaccheus*, who is therefore called, *the chief of Publicans.*

JOHN ii. 1.

The ſenſe of this verſe is, that *it was the third day of the marriage that was in Cana*; and that was the reaſon they *wanted wine*, when Jeſus came. This was likewiſe the reaſon why the Ruler of the feaſt ſaid, *Every man, at the beginning doth ſet forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worſe: but thou haſt kept the good wine until now.*

JOHN iv. 18.

The meaning of this paſſage is, *the woman had continued a widow from the death of her fifth huſband*, and the man here mentioned was the *near kinſman*, who had *a right to redeem*; as,

Ruth

Ruth iv. 4. and was not yet betrothed to her, but might dwell in the ſame houſe with her, or perform the part of a faithful friend.

John viii. 5, 6. 9.

The Scribes and Phariſees brought to Chriſt a woman taken in adultery, with this enſnaring queſtion; *Moſes commanded that ſuch ſhould be ſtoned, but what ſayeſt thou?* Had Chriſt *forbade* her being ſtoned, he would have been put to death for a deſpiſer of Moſes's law, and a promoter of adultery. Had he *commanded* her to be ſtoned, they would have accuſed him to the governor, as guilty of rebellion; for the Romans would not ſuffer the Jews to put any man to death.—But why did Jeſus *ſtoop down, and write on the ground?* In this he imitated what was required by God, in Numbers v. 17. 23. in the tryal of an adulterous wife; when the prieſt was to *take of the duſt of the floor*, &c. *and write the curſes*, &c. &c.—How could Jeſus be *left alone and the woman ſtanding in the midſt?* The meaning muſt be this: ſhe was left without any of her accuſers; who, *being convicted by their own conſciences, went away one by one.*

John x. 3. 4.

Our huſbandmen underſtand not what is meant by a *ſhepherd calling his ſheep, and their following him*, nor of a *porter opening the door of a ſheepfold*. In the Weſt of England ſhepherds do

do not now drive their ſheep before them as ours do; but *go before them*, and the the ſheep *follow*. Our Saviour in ſpeaking of ſuch a ſheep fold as a thief could not *enter by the door*, nor the ſhepherd himſelf open, but *a porter openeth to the ſhepherd*, had reſpect to the ſheep that were kept in places near the temple, to be ſold to thoſe who had occaſion for them for ſacrifices, near which he was when he ſpake theſe words.

John xii. 39, 40.

Very remarkable is this paſſage, and miſunderſtood by many. The meaning of it is certainly this. The Jews' unbelief was the fulfilling of Iſaiah's prophecy; not that his prophecy was the reaſon or cauſe of their unbelief. In many places of the Goſpel it is ſaid, that ſuch a thing was done *that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by the prophet*; and yet it is certain that the thing was not therefore done becauſe it had been foretold, but was foretold becauſe it would certainly be done. So, in this place, the Jews' unbelief was not to be wondered at: it was nothing more than what Iſaiah had foretold. That this is the ſenſe will appear by conſidering the words of Iſaiah, chapter vi. 9. and our Saviour's application of them by way of reproof. Matt. xiii. 13. and St. Paul's, with ſtill ſharper rebuke, to thoſe who rejected his preaching. Acts xxviii. 25.

John

John xix. 34.

The mention both of *blood and water* in this verſe is meant to prove that Jeſus Chriſt really died upon the Croſs; for the ſmall quantity of water in which the heart ſwims being let out of a perſon or animal; that creature muſt neceſſarily die. Alſo the blood about the heart being congealed, and the watery part flowing out, ſhews the body to have been dead ſome time.

John xxi. 22.

A ſtrange miſtake has ariſen from miſunderſtanding this verſe; as if a Jew then living were now wandering upon Earth, and ſhould continue to do ſo till Chriſt *come* to judge the world. The words were ſpoken of *St. John*; and were then, and for ſome time after, underſtood by ſome of the diſciples as a prophecy that St. John *ſhould not die*, (as the next verſe informs us), but continue alive till the day of judgement; which ſome then preſent thought to be nearer than it really was. Our Saviour did not ſay that he ſhould continue alive till the day of judgement, or any other fixt time; but only, that it did not concern St. Peter to know when St. John ſhould die; or whether he ſhould die at all. St. John lived the longeſt of all the Apoſtles; and ſaw the deſtruction of the temple and city of Jeruſalem, which is called *the coming of Chriſt*.

Acts i. 25.

Some divines commend the modeſty and charity of St. Luke, who does not ſay that Judas was damned; but that *he went to his own place:* or, as others, a place more fit for him than the apoſtleſhip. There are yet others who think this expreſſion does not relate to *Judas*; but to *Matthias*. Theſe words, *from which Judas by tranſgreſſion fell*, ſhould be incloſed in a parentheſis.

Acts vi. ix.

By *libertines* are not meant *wicked and diſorderly perſons*; ſuch as take the liberty of living as they pleaſe, but only the ſons of ſuch ſlaves as had obtained the freedom of the city of Rome.

Acts x. 5.

It may be aſked, if God was ſo kind to Cornelius as to ſend an Angel to him, why did he not direct the Angel to inſtruct him in what he was to do? This plainly ſhews that we are not to expect *extraordinary* means of inſtruction, where God has already appointed *ordinary* means. The Angel, no doubt, could as eaſily have told Cornelius what he ought to do, as bid him *ſend for St. Peter*; but this would not have been ſo agreeable to the order which Chriſt had ſettled in his Church. Chriſt has appointed his Apoſtles, and other miniſters, to adminiſter

his ordinances; and therefore God did not ſuffer even an angel to break-in upon this order; but directed St. Peter to go to the Centurion.

Acts xix. 2.

The anſwer to the queſtion here (if our tranſlation expreſſes it right,) is very ſurpriſing: *we have not ſo much as heard whether there be any Holy-Ghoſt.* As if any Chriſtian convert could be ſo ignorant as not to have heard of the Holy Spirit of God. The meaning of the words is plainly this. As the Apoſtles were baptized with the Holy Ghoſt on the day of Pentecoſt; ſo it pleaſed God to endue others who were baptized by the Apoſtles with ſome viſible gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, ſuch as ſpeaking with tongues, propheſying, &c. Now the diſciples meant only, that they did not know that the Holy Spirit had been ſo given. They had not received ſuch gifts themſelves; nor heard that they had been given to others. Some have tranſlated theſe words thus; *we have not heard whether any do receive the Holy Ghoſt.*

Acts xix. 24.

Shrines mean the places where the bodies of ſaints are buried; or the cheſts which contain thoſe bodies. The Greek word here means *temples or chapels*; ſmall they muſt needs be, becauſe the text ſays they were *made of ſilver.* They probably contained little images of the goddeſs

goddeſs Diana: for which reaſon the word *Shrines* ſeems to have been choſe to expreſs them.

Acts xxii. 3.

Brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, is an expreſſion taken from the form of the Jewiſh ſchools; the ſeats or benches whereof were ſo contrived, that the ſcholars ſat underneath the deſk of the Rabbi, or Doctor, and conſequently *at his feet*.

Romans v. 1.

Where St. Paul ſays, we are *juſtified by faith*, he means to exclude *works*, that is, deeds of the law, ſuch as circumciſion, ſacrifices, purification, &c. and ſometimes expreſſes himſelf ſo, as Romans iii. 28. but never *good works*: for of theſe he ſays, *we are created in Chriſt Jeſus, unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we ſhould walk in them.* Eph. ii. 9. The firſt word of this verſe ſhews that it belongs to the former chapter; and relates to *the works of the law*; which St. Paul proves to be unneceſſary, by Abraham's being juſtified without them.

Romans v. 7.

This verſe was more eaſy to be underſtood by the vulgar Jews, than by us: for they well knew that there was a ſect of men, whom they called *Tſadikim*, that is, *righteous men*, perſons who

who were very juſt and righteous, and fulfilled the law to a tittle. There was likewiſe another ſect of men called *Chaſedim*, or *good men*, who valued themſelves in going beyond this, in being holy *above what the law required*. Theſe were much beloved by the people; ſo that they would be ready to die for one of them. St. Paul alludes to theſe when he ſays, *ſcarcely for a righteous man would one die, yet for a good man ſome would even dare to die.*

ROMANS ix. 3.

St. Paul's wiſh to be *accurſed from Chriſt* has employed the minds of many ſerious Chriſtians: it could not poſſibly be, that ſo holy a perſon could wiſh himſelf ſeparated from Chriſt, who ſays of himſelf, in another place, that he *had a deſire to depart, and be with Chriſt*. The word tranſlated *accurſed* means devoted to deſtruction, or death, and, inſtead of *from* Chriſt, ſome read, *after the example* of Chriſt. Others, *for the ſake* of Chriſt, that is, St. Paul would wiſh to die as Chriſt did, to promote the ſpiritual happineſs of his countrymen.

ROMANS ix. 31.

The law of Righteouſneſs certainly means here, *the righteouſneſs of the law*, the order of the words being changed or tranſpoſed, as a little attention to what there follows will ſhew.

1 Cor. vii. 31.

Even an ordinary reader may perceive, that there is ſomething amiſs in this tranſlation; *uſing this world, as not abuſing it.* The preceding words ſhew the ſenſe to be, *as not* USING *it*; or as though they uſed it not. The reaſon given for this is, *the faſhion of the world paſſeth away*; ſomething like a ſcene in a play, where all things appear what they really are not: therefore *they that rejoice* ſhould be *as though they rejoiced not.* Chriſtians ſhould be temperate in all things; uſing the things of the world with great moderation, or as though they uſed them not.

1 Cor. xi. 4, 5, 6.

The men of Corinth, according to the cuſtom of the Greeks, wore long hair; and in their public aſſemblies prayed to God with their heads covered. St. Paul rectifies this error, and ſays, *every man praying or propheſying with his head covered, diſhonoureth his head,* that is, *Chriſt* his head, not diſhonoureth *his own* head, by covering it; if he did, it ſhould never be covered. *Every woman praying or propheſying with her head uncovered, diſhonoureth her head,* that is, *Chriſt* her head; or as others ſay *man* her head, whoſe glory ſhe is. In the next verſe he ſays, *if a woman be not covered let her be ſhorn: but it is a ſhame for a woman to be ſhorn or ſhaven*; for that

was

was a token either of whoredom, or deep mourning; therefore *let her be covered, or veiled.*

1 Cor. xv. 29.

Some think that to be *baptized for the dead* ſhould be underſtood in the ſame ſenſe as Romans vi. 3. *As many as are baptized into Jeſus Chriſt, are baptiſed into his death.* Others ſay it ſhould be *over* the dead, that is, over the graves of the martyrs, in token of being ready to follow them. Others reaſon thus: who would be ſo weak as to be baptized into the faith of a reſurrection, that give themſelves up for eternally dead after this life? It may alſo mean to be baptized *in the place or ſtead* of one that died before he was baptized, or elſe upon confeſſing the article of the reſurrection; which laſt ſeems moſt probable.

1 Cor. xv. 32.

This verſe is wrong pointed in our Engliſh tranſlation. It ought to be read thus: *if, after the manner of men, I have fought with beaſts at Epheſus, what advantageth it me?—If the dead riſe not, let us eat and drink; for to-morrow we die.* Thus moſt of the ancient copies divide the verſe; and the preſent way of pointing it is of no authority.

1 Cor. xvi. 22.

Anathema, Maran-atha, are words not to be underſtood by common readers. The firſt

means *accurſed*; or devoted to deſtruction: the other ſignifies, *the Lord cometh*. The meaning of the latter expreſſion may be this: The Jews had not the power of life and death: but when a perſon had committed a crime for which by their law he ought to die, and the Romans would not permit them to puniſh him with death; they then pronounced ſentence againſt ſuch a man, expecting that God would inflict a puniſhment on him ſimiliar to what was preſcribed by their law: therefore it is ſaid, *the Lord cometh*, or will come to execute ſuch judgement. This was likewiſe conſidered by the Jews as the greateſt curſe.

2 Cor. xiii. 5.

That Jeſus Chriſt is in you, that is, *among* you. The ſenſe will be reſolved into this queſtion and anſwer: *Know ye not*, by miracles and preaching, *that Jeſus Chriſt is among you?* This by way of queſtion; for ſo it is in the Greek. Then, by way of anſwer; *except ye be reprobates*, that is, ye are hardened, inſenſible creatures, or *void of judgement*, if ye do not.

Philip. ii. 6, 7.

From thoſe Scriptures which ſpeak of Chriſt as *a man*, ſome are ſo unreaſonable as to conclude that he was nothing *more* than a mere man; and ſo deny his *divinity*. Others, on the contrary, from thoſe texts which ſpeak of him as

as *God*, do as fooliſhly deny his *humanity*. Theſe verſes prove that Chriſt was God *in our human nature:* for, as his *being in the form of a ſervant* ſignified that he was ſuch in reality; ſo, his *being in the form of God* muſt ſignify, that he is *really and truly God.*

1 Tim. i. 15.

The common expoſition of this place, namely, that St. Paul acknowledges himſelf *the greateſt of ſinners*, becauſe he ſays, *of whom I am chief*, is not agreeable to truth, piety, or good ſenſe. At the time he ſpoke theſe words, he was not a ſinner, but *a choſen veſſel*; and *not inferior to any of the Apoſtles*. His meaning is, that he was one of the *firſt* of thoſe ſinners Jeſus Chriſt did ſave. As if he had ſaid, among thoſe that are ſaved by Chriſt, I am one of the firſt.

2 Tim. iv. 14.

St. Paul, ſpeaking of the evil done by Alexander, adds; *the Lord reward him according to his works*. This ſeems to imply an evil wiſh toward him: but ſeveral verſions, and many of the fathers, read, *will* reward him. This affords a ſufficient anſwer to the difficulty. All the ancients note that this is only a *prophecy*; and one very well becoming an Apoſtle.

Hebrews vii. 3.

Such an account as this, of Melchiſedec being *without Father or Mother*, cannot naturally be

given of any man. It may mean that he was without Father or Mother of *any prieſtly order*. The next words likewiſe, which in Engliſh might have explained the former, require ſome explanation; namely, *without deſcent*; that is, without a regiſter or catalogue of his deſcent: or, as it is in the Greek, *without any genealogy, or pedigree*. The Jews, and other ancient nations, commonly called all perſons, whoſe pedigrees were obſcure or loſt, fatherleſs and motherleſs. The ſame interpretation may alſo be given of the following expreſſions, *having neither beginning of days, nor end of life*, that is, not recorded in Scripture: for nothing is there ſaid of the beginning or end of his life.

Hebrews xii. 16.

Eſau is here called *a profane perſon*; perhaps for deſpiſing the chief-prieſthood, which was the office and privilege of the eldeſt of the family; or elſe for ſlighting the ſolemn prayers and bleſſings of his father, with which the birthright of the elder ſon was confirmed to him. But the true notion of his profaneneſs appears from his hiſtory, Geneſis xxv. 32. *He did eat and drink, and roſe up and went his way*, that is, careleſs and unconcerned.

James ii. 10.

When St. James ſays, *whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of*

of all; he is ſuppoſed to have reſpect to what he calls *the royal law*, or the *loving our neighbour as ourſelves*, and to mean, that he who offends his neighbour by *one* act of uncharitableneſs, is as guilty of breaking this law, as if he had tranſgreſſed in *every other*. St. James's words may full as well be underſtood of *the moral law*; or *ten commandments*: not that he ſays, whoſo breaks one of theſe will be *puniſhed as ſeverely* as he who offends in all; but that the man, who allows himſelf to live in the wilful breach of any one of them, gives a ſtrong proof that he does not obſerve the reſt out of any regard to God, but becauſe they are leſs diſagreeable to him; otherwiſe, he would obſerve one as well as another, for they are all enforced by the ſame authority.

James ii. 13.

Mercy is here put for *the merciful man*; as *circumciſion* is put for the *circumciſed perſon*, in Romans ii. 26, 27. *Rejoiceth againſt judgement*, may be, *triumphs over condemnation*. So the ſenſe will be; the merciful man triumphs at his judgement, or at his tryal.

1 Epist. St. John. iii. 6.

It ſeems from the latter part of this verſe, that we are obliged to be abſolutely perfect in holineſs; and that the leaſt ſin committed by a Chriſtian ſhuts him out of the kingdom of

Heaven. This is not indeed to be taken ſo ſtrictly; for it would be contrary to ſeveral places of Scripture, and even to the words of this Epiſtle. *If we confeſs our ſins, God is faithful and juſt to forgive us our ſins*; chap. i. verſe 9. and, *if any man ſin, we have an advocate with the father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our ſins.* Chap. ii. verſe 1. 2. The truth is; whoſoever allows himſelf in any known ſin, and dies without repentance, *abideth not in Chriſt*, is in the ſame condition as if he had *not ſeen Chriſt, neither known him.*

1 John iii. 16.

The words; *of God*; are not in the Greek. The text is, *hereby we have experienced love*: that is, the greateſt love, *becauſe he*, namely Chriſt, *laid down his life for us.*

1 John v. 2.

Both. St. John's argument, and the foregoing verſe, plainly ſhew that theſe words are tranſpoſed. The reading ſhould be; *By this we know that we love God, when we love the children of God.*

Jude verſe 7.

Eternal fire, ſometimes, in the New Teſtament, means the fire of Hell, which cannot here relate to *the inhabitants of Sodom*, becauſe no human ſouls yet ſuffer that puniſhment. *The wicked Angels*

Angels are reſerved in everlaſting chains under darkneſs unto the judgement of the great day, verſe 6. It rather refers to the *cities*, and the valley where they ſtood, which were overflowed with ſomething ſo inflammable, that it continued burning, in ſome degree, till after the Apoſtles days. Hence St. Jude ſays, *theſe cities ſuffered the vengeance of eternal fire*; or fire that laſted from generation to generation: which might well be ſaid, as it was then burning, and had continued ſo near two thouſand years.

Revelations vi. 6.

It may ſeem to an Engliſh reader, that *a meaſure of wheat for a penny* is a deſcription of great plenty; but here it means the contrary. A penny was the *daily wages of a labourer*, Matthew xx. 2. and was about ſeven pence halfpenny of our money. *A meaſure*, in this verſe, means, the quantity that was allowed to a ſlave for his daily food. If ſuch a meaſure of wheat was worth a labourer's daily wages, corn muſt needs bear a very high price. What would become of a family, if a man's wages would only provide bread for *his own ſubſiſtence?*

TEXTS WRESTED OR PERVERTED.

GENESIS iv. 19.

THE example of *Lamech*, who had two wives, has amongſt others in the Old Teſtament been produced to prove that cuſtom allowable *now*. This is the only inſtance before the Flood, and this is not mentioned to the credit of Lamech, nor with approbation, nor as a thing uſual. Our Saviour intimates the contrary, when he ſays, *Moſes, becauſe of the hardneſs of your heart, ſuffered you to put away your wives; but from the beginning it was not ſo*, Matt. xix. 8. The Jewiſh law was indeed favourable to this practice, yet one of the Prophets declares himſelf expreſsly againſt it, Malachi ii. 15, 16. *Take heed, and let none deal treacherouſly againſt the wife of his youth, for the Lord*

Lord the God of Iſrael ſaith, he hateth putting away. Whatever liberty was allowed *formerly*, the *Chriſtian rule* is, *to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own huſband.*

GENESIS v. 27.

From the extraordinary length of *Methuſelah's* life, and of the other perſons mentioned in this chapter, ſome have contended that their years were only *months*. Such an interpretation muſt create greater difficulties: as, that ſome of them muſt have had children at five years old. See verſe xv. 21. Moſes ſays, that in the Flood *the Ark reſted on the 17th day of the 7th month*, Geneſis viii. 4. and *on the firſt day of the 10th month, the tops of the mountains were ſeen*, verſe 5. So that then ſeveral days were required to make a month, and ſeveral months, to make a year: and therefore their years were not *months*, but a ſpace of time nearly equal to our years. Good reaſons may be aſſigned for their long lives, as, for the quicker peopling the new World, and for preſerving religion by their mouths, when writing was not known.

NUMBERS viii. 10.

This text hath been perverted to countenance the election of miniſters by the people, as if the people *ordained the Levites* by the impoſition of their hands; whereas this laying on of their hands was becauſe the Levites were to be in the place

place of a *ſin-offering* for the whole congregation, verſe 19. The children of Iſrael therefore tranſferred their ſin upon the Levites by laying their hands upon them; and then the Levites transferred their ſin upon the beaſts, by laying their hands upon them, (not ſurely to ordain the beaſts, but) that they ſhould be an atonement for them.

Deuteron. xviii. 10. 12.

An obſervation of Times is declared *an abomination to the Lord*, and was one of thoſe provocations for which the Gentiles were driven out of the land of Canaan. The Times and days which the Heathens obſerved were, either thoſe dedicated to their falſe Gods, or elſe ſuch as they thought lucky or unlucky days. This cannot extend to ſuch as Chriſtians now obſerve for religious worſhip, as *Faſts*, or *Feaſts*; for all nations uſed *faſting*; and as to *Feaſts*, God himſelf appointed the obſervation of three of them, Deut. xvi. 16. and our Saviour kept *the Feaſt of the Dedication* of the Church, John x. 22. which was ſuch as our pariſh feaſts are at this day.

2 Chron. xv. 13.

The Jews did well to enter into a covenant, *that whoſoever would not ſeek the Lord, ſhould be put to death*, becauſe this was reviving an expreſs law. Deut. xvii. 5. Yet this ought not to be brought as an example for putting to death *Chriſtians*,

Chriſtians, who diſſent from one another in ſome particular points, becauſe Chriſtians all worſhip the ſame God. The Spirit of the Goſpel alſo is different from that of the Jewiſh law, as our Saviour has declared. Luke ix. 55.

JOB vii. 1. JOB xiv. 5.

From theſe words of Job, *Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth? his days are determined*, an opinion hath been ſpread, that the day of every man's death is determined by God before he comes into the World. This cannot be true, becauſe God has in Scripture repeatedly promiſed *long life* to the righteous, and threatened to *ſhorten the years of the wicked*. *Hezekiah*, and the *Nenevites*, had their days prolonged, upon their repentance. If this opinion were true, it could not properly be ſaid of the wicked, that they *ſhall not live out half their days*, Pſalm lv. 25. for let them die ever ſo ſoon, they muſt have lived all their appointed days. Job's words relate to the common period of human life in general, which *is* determined, and called the *days* or *years of man*.

PROVERBS XXX. 19.

Ill-diſpoſed men, who ridicule ſerious things, abuſe this text. Agur was a virtuous, as well as a wiſe man, and therefore, by *the way of a man with a maid*, he could intend nothing but the way and manner of men, in uſing crafty devices

vices to ſeduce and betray Virgins. This is what every good man is innocent of.

Ecclesiastes iii. 19.

How greatly are theſe words of Solomon miſtaken, or rather perverted, *that which befalleth the ſons of men, befalleth beaſts, as the one dieth, ſo dieth the other*; as if the final end of both were the ſame. Conſider only the foregoing and following verſes, and you will perceive that Solomon is ſpeaking of the ſtate of men in *this* world, not in the *next*; and, to ſhew the vanity of this life, he ſays, that men ſhall die and *be turned into duſt*, as well as the beaſts. *All go to one place*, that is, the grave, and though, when man dieth, his *Spirit ſhall return to God*, and he ſhall be *judged*, and rewarded according to his deeds, chap. xii. 7. 14. yet none *knoweth the Spirit of a man that goeth upward*, &c. that is, none can diſcern a *man's* ſoul which aſcends, or goeth upward, any more than the ſoul of a *beaſt* which deſcends or goeth downward.

Ecclesiastes vii. 16.

Profane perſons abuſe this precept of Solomon, *be not righteous over much, neither make thyſelf over-wiſe*; as if a man could be too righteous, or too wiſe. The meaning is, do not pretend to ſuch holineſs as you are not capable of, this is to be over righteous. Do not invent ſuch

rules, as the Scriptures do not require, this is to be over-wiſe. Or it may mean, do not exerciſe juſtice too rigourouſly, neither ſet up for a man of too great wiſdom; and many think this an exact tranſlation of the words.

Isaiah lviii. 5.

Although the Prophet here cautions men againſt relying upon the outward formalities of faſting; ſuch as, *bowing down their head as a bulruſh*, or *putting on ſackcloth*; yet no part of this chapter can fairly be ſaid to diſcourage faſting itſelf, which has been appointed of God, and therefore obſerved by good men in all ages. Our Saviour both commands the practice, and offers to reward it. Matt. vi. 17. 18. They who thus pervert the Prophet's words overlook the meaning of them, which is, to diſtinguiſh between a *counterfeit* Faſt and a *real* one, as appears from the verſes immediately following.

Isaiah lxiv. 6.

Becauſe it is here ſaid, *we are all as an unclean thing, all our righteouſneſs as filthy rags*; it has been aſſerted, that *good works are not required of us by God*; that *we can do no good work*; *believe and be ſaved is all.* That God hath commanded good works, no one can doubt, who reads and believes the ſcriptures; ſo frequently are they therein required; and that we *may* perform them

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is as clear, for where God hath commanded, there he hath given power to perform.

JEREMIAH ix. 4. MICAH vii. 5.

Innocent words have been misapplied to support horrid doctrines. Such is the case of these prudent cautions of the Prophets, *take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother:* and again, *trust ye not in a friend.* They have been used to countenance fraud and cheating, as if every man *might*, where he *could*, impose upon his neighbour, who should be always upon his guard, and *beware of his friend:* much contrary to St. Paul's advice, *let no man go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter*; 1 Thess. iv. 6. and our Saviour's noble rule of *doing to others as we would they should do to us.*

JEREMIAH xvii. 9.

This verse has been separated from the rest of the chapter, and used to as strange a purpose as one can well imagine, namely, to prove, that *men are not acquainted with themselves, but are strangers to their own hearts, whith they cannot know.* The words relate not to the knowledge of *our own* hearts, but the hearts of *others.* The four preceding verses shew the wisdom of relying upon God, and the folly of trusting to men; for they may deceive you; for this reason; *the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?*

JEREMIAH

JEREMIAH xviii. 6.

The compariſon of *a potter* does not ſignify that God created men on purpoſe to deſtroy them, or make them miſerable at his pleaſure; but is meant to ſhew the Jews, that they were in the hands of God; and that he was able to puniſh them, and then reſtore them again, like as a potter, who thinking to make a good veſſel, and not ſucceeding, might *break it, and make another of the ſame clay*, verſe 4. Thus God himſelf explains it, verſe 8. 9. when he ſays that, *if a nation which he had purpoſed to deſtroy, turned from its iniquity, he would not deſtroy it: and if a nation, which he had been determined to bleſs, did not hearken to his voice, he would repent of the good wherewith he ſaid he would benefit them.*

JOEL ii. 28.

It has been alledged from hence, that though, under the law of Moſes, people were *to learn the law from the mouth of the prieſt*, yet now, under the Goſpel, God hath ſo plentifully poured out his Spirit upon *all*, that *every believer* is enabled to propheſy or preach. The Prophet Joel does not here ſpeak of the power given by Chriſt to his Apoſtles, and ſucceſſors, to preach, and adminiſter his ſacraments only, but of the extraordinary gift of tongues and other miracles; and ſo St. Peter explains theſe words in Acts ii.

15. This text does not prove that *all ſhould be teachers*, but that *Chriſtian* teachers, and their diſciples, ſhould have more knowledge than men had under *the law*.

Amos vii. 14.

This Prophet was *an herdſman*, and ſome of the Apoſtles were *fiſhermen:* therefore ſome would conclude, that even the moſt ignorant and loweſt of the people may perform any miniſterial office. It is a great miſtake to think that the Apoſtles were ſuch very mean perſons: and if they had been ſo, *they*, as well as *Amos*, had a particular call from God, and could prove that call by working miracles. Could any man do ſo now, it might gain him ſome credit; though we are told, that *God who at ſundry times, and in divers manners, ſpake in time paſt unto the fathers by the Prophets, hath in theſe laſt days ſpoken unto us by his ſon.* Heb. i. 2. This ſhews, that we are not to look for miracles, but make uſe of the eſtabliſhed means.

Micah. iii. 11.

Manifeſtly are theſe words of the Prophet Micah wreſted, to accuſe the Clergy, that *the prieſts teach for hire*, and who are therefore ſcornfully called *hirelings*. The Prophet ſaid not this of the Jewiſh prieſts, becauſe *they had a maintenance*, for *that* God himſelf allotted them, and a very large one too; but becauſe

for

for hire, they dared to teach what God had not appointed them; but what beſt pleaſed the people, and for money ſoothed them in their ſins. Chap. ii. 11. St Paul ſaith, *they which preach the Goſpel, ſhould live of the Goſpel.* 1 Cor. ix. 14. and our Saviour pronounces *the labourer to be worthy of his hire.* Luke x. 7.

MALACHI i. 2, 3.

Jacob have I loved, and Eſau have I hated, is a paſſage not rightly underſtood, when applied to the doctrine of Predeſtination. The word *hated* does not here bear the meaning we uſually give it; but ſignifies only, *a leſs degree of regard,* as when Leah is ſaid to be *hated* of Jacob, Gen. xxix. 31. it is explained, in the verſe before, thus: Jacob loved Rachael *more* than Leah. The original prophecy is in Gen. xxv. 23. *The elder ſhall ſerve the younger,* that is, the elder *people*; not the elder *Brother.* It did not reſpect the *perſons* of Jacob and Eſau, but *their poſterity:* for in themſelves it was far from being fulfilled, ſince Eſau was a powerful prince, while his brother was only a ſhepherd for hire.

MATT. v. 34.

The Quakers greatly miſtake in denying the lawfulneſs of ſolemn oaths, and pervert the meaning of this text; and that of St. James v. 12. both of which relate only to vain and raſh oaths, uſed *in common converſation:* particularly

when men ſwore *by Heaven, by the Earth,* or any of God's creatures. It is very plain that God hath *commanded* men to *ſwear by his Name,* upon a proper occaſion, Deut. x. 20. and the Prophet Jeremiah has given directions in what manner a ſolemn Oath is to be taken. Chap. iv. 2.

Matt. vi. 9.

The notion that the Lord's Prayer is only a pattern or directory, is founded on ignorance of the Greek tongue. Had the Greek word been properly tranſlated, *thus pray ye,* or, *ye ſhall thus pray*; there would have been no diſpute about it. In Luke xi. 2. there is no liberty left men to uſe this form or not, as they pleaſe: but they are poſitively required, *when they pray, to ſay, Our Father which art in Heav'n,* &c. &c.

Matt. vii. 15, 16.

Many would perſuade us, that, by the words, *Ye ſhall know them by their fruits,* our Saviour would have us judge of falſe Prophets by the goodneſs or badneſs of their lives and actions. This is not his meaning; for, we are told, ſuch will be ſure to appear outwardly good in order to deceive. St. Paul alſo ſpeaks of ſome who ſhould *transform themſelves into the Apoſtles of Chriſt.* 2 Cor. xi. 13. By *fruits* therefore are to be underſtood the *conſequences and effects of their*

their doctrines.—Neither does *ſheep's cloathng* here mean *innocency*, but the *garb* or *dreſs of a Prophet*, which was an outward robe of hair, or fur. As if our Saviour had ſaid; they will come to you in the dreſs and habit of prieſts; but their falſe doctrines are as deſtructive to the ſouls of men, as ravenous wolves are to their bodies.

Matt. xv. 9.

When this text is applied to the ordinances of our Church, it is greatly miſunderſtood: for our Saviour ſpeaks only againſt ſuch *traditions*, or *commandments of men*, as *tranſgreſs the commands of God*, verſe 3. and *make the commandments of God of none effect*, verſe 6. Chriſt no where forbids us to obſerve ſuch commandments of men as do *not* tranſgreſs the law of God.

Matt. xix. 21.

Since our Saviour requires the young man to *ſell his eſtate, and give the money to the poor*; we may be ſure it was a particular command to him, (perhaps to convince him of his inſincerity), and not a precept common to all Chriſtians. There were many rich men in the Church; as appears from 1 Tim. vi. 17. James i. 10. and ii. 2. Chriſt does not mention it as a thing abſolutely neceſſary to his being a good man. He might have went away ſatisfied with our Lord's firſt anſwer.

MATT. xxii. 14.

Much depends upon a right underſtanding of theſe words, *many are called, but few choſen:* which certainly mean nothing more than the *calling* of men to embrace the Chriſtian religion, and the *chuſing* of ſuch to enjoy the rewards of it as ſhall perform the conditions which the Goſpel requires. This the New Teſtament every where declares; *whoſoever will repent and believe the Goſpel, ſhall be ſaved,* and *whoſoever will not, ſhall go into everlaſting fire.* The puniſhment of the man, *caſt into outer darkneſs,* was not from any decree of God, that *He* ſhould be *refuſed,* and the *reſt admitted*; but the reaſon is declared to be, becauſe he *had not on a wedding garment,* that is, he did not take care to cloath himſelf as became the occaſion.

MATT. xxiii. 23. 25.

In theſe, and other verſes of this Chapter, woes are pronounced againſt the Scribes and Phariſees together; whence ſome conclude, that all Scribes were Phariſees, and equally guilty with them, which was not the caſe. Scribe was not the name of a *Sect,* but an *office*; and ſome of the Scribes were of the ſect of the *Sadduces.* In ſome Greek Teſtaments, the word for *and,* between Scribes and Phariſees, is omitted, therefore in them the ſenſe is, *Woe to you Scribes Phariſees, Hypocrites,* that is, Wo unto your Scribes that are

are of the ſect of the Phariſees, ye Hypocrites. This ſeems clear from the 11th Chapter of St. Luke, where the ſame woes are pronounced againſt the Phariſees only.

MATT. xxvi. 20.

An indecent and ſlovenly practice of *ſitting* at the ſacrament of the Lord's Supper has been perverſely introduced in ſome congregations, becauſe it is here ſaid, *Jeſus ſat down with the twelve*; when, in truth, he did not *ſit*, but *lay or leaned*. Had it been properly tranſlated, *lay down*, the common people would have been ignorant of the meaning of the expreſſion, which is this: it was not the cuſtom of thoſe times, or countries, *to ſit down to eat*, as we do, but to *lay down* or *lean on beds and couches*, reſting on one elbow, and eating with the other hand.—This holy ſacrament is the higheſt act of devotion we are capable of upon earth; and therefore ſhould be received in the humbleſt poſture, and, as our Church directs, *meekly kneeling upon our knees*.

MATT. xxvi. 26.

When our Saviour ſaid, *this is my body*, he could not mean, that the bread he was then breaking was his real, natural body, which was at that time alive and whole, before his Apoſtles eyes; but figuratively, ſacramentally, and in repreſentation ſo. The Paſſover of the

Jews was a ſacrament, obſerved in remembrance of the deſtroying Angel's paſſing over the houſes of the Iſraelites; yet the *lamb itſelf* which was ſacrificed, is called *the paſſover*, Exod. xii. 11. that is, a remembrance of what was done at the firſt paſſover. So Chriſt's words ſignify, and his actions repreſent what was done at his death. If this bread be ſacramentally eaten, as Chriſt and his Apoſtles have directed, it will, in effect, become his real body to all faithful Chriſtians.

MATT. xxviii. 19.

Becauſe *teaching* is here ſet before *baptizing*, ſome have pretended that children ſhould not be baptized till they are old enough to be taught. But if the placing of the words be any argument againſt baptizing firſt, we may produce the ſame againſt teaching firſt; for in St. Mark i. 4. the word *baptize* is ſet before the word *teach*. Certainly perſons of years ſhould be inſtructed before baptiſm; but infants may be baptized as ſoon as born: for they may receive the ſign of the covenant with God, as well as Jewiſh children did circumciſion at eight days old.

MARK. x. 14.

The cleareſt expreſſions are not ſufficient to convince prejudiced minds. *Suffer little children to come unto me*, is pretended to mean, not *children in years*, but *children in underſtanding*. The next verſe explains this. It is there ſaid, Chriſt *took them*

them up in his arms; which is not uſually done to men, but children. Beſides, the Greek word ſignifies children under four years old.

Luke xiv. 23.

Perſecution has been made uſe of in Religion, from miſapplying theſe words, *compel them to come in*, which only mean, uſe ſtrong and preſſing invitations, ſuch has can hardly be refuſed. In this ſenſe the word *conſtrained* is uſed, chap. xxiv. 29, where the diſciples uſed no violence: they only earneſtly intreated our Lord to ſtay with them, and he did ſo. Our Saviour never uſed force, but ſaid, IF *any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf*. Matt. xvi. 24. IF *thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments*, 19. 17.

John iii. 5.

Even theſe plain words of Chriſt have been perverted, *Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*. It has been ſaid, that the word *man* here means a *man grown*, and not a *child*, which is by no means true, for the original word ſignifies *any one*, or *any perſon, man, woman, or child*. We need no other language than our own to underſtand this expreſſion. When it is ſaid, *what man is he that liveth and ſhall not ſee death*, Pſalm lxxxix. 48. and, *when a man's ways pleaſe the Lord*,

he maketh his enemies to be at peace with him, Prov. xvi. 17; there is no one but thinks the word *man* means any perſon, *male* or *female*, *young* or *old*.

JOHN xiv. 28.

A man muſt be wilfully blind not to ſee the two natures of *God* and *man* in the perſon of Jeſus Chriſt. In reſpect of his *human* nature only, it is that he ſays, *my Father is greater than I*. His *divine* nature, wherein he is equal with God the Father, is aſſerted in theſe words of St. John, chap. i. 1. *In the beginning was the word* (or Chriſt), *and the word was with God, and the word was God*. Theſe two texts, put together, plainly prove that Jeſus Chriſt is *perfect God and perfect man*.

JOHN xviii. 36.

It is a moſt ſtrange concluſion from theſe words, that *no Chriſtian ought to reign as a king, or be a governor or magiſtrate*. The meaning of our Saviour is, that, though he be a king, and *hath a name, king of kings, and lord of lords*, Rev. xix. 16; yet he beareth not a *temporal* ſceptre, but hath a *ſpiritual* kingdom, ruling in the hearts of the faithful. The Chriſtian religion was intended to make no alteration in the temporal government of the world. St. Paul's direction (1 Cor. vii. 20.) is, *Let every man abide in the ſame calling wherein he was called*;

called; therefore kings and magiſtrates, being converted to Chriſtianity, may well continue in ſuch offices.

Acts ii. 44.

We muſt not imagine that Chriſtians have no property in their eſtates, becauſe it is ſaid, *believers had all things common.* This community of goods was not commanded by the Apoſtles; but all was freely given by the rich. Nor did all men ſo ſell their effects, but might and did lawfully retain them; as we ſee, Chap. v. 4. St. Peter alſo, after he was called to the apoſtleſhip, had at leaſt a houſe into which Chriſt entered, to heal his wife's mother. Matt. viii. 14.

Acts vi. 3.

Here is nothing that favours the power of the laity, or the common people at large, in chuſing perſons to perform ſacred offices: for though the choice of theſe ſeven was committed to them; yet it was done by the appointment of the Apoſtles themſelves; who particularly mentioned the number and qualifications of the perſons to be choſen, and who reſerved to *themſelves* their appointment to this office, by *laying on of their hands*, verſe 6. This text is, in many of our Bibles, very falſely rendered: For, from the year 1638 to 1660, and in ſome ſince, it is printed, YE *may appoint*, thereby devolving

volving the power of ordination into the hands of the laity.

Acts x. 35.

St. Peter's words, *In every nation, he that feareth God and worketh righteouſneſs is accepted with him*, have been urged to prove, that *it ſignifies little what religion a man is of, provided he lives according to that which he profeſſes*: which is very far from his meaning. For if it be true that all ways of religious worſhip are equally good; what need was there of an angel's being ſent to Cornelius to convert him? St. Peter meant to ſhew the *Jews*, that they were not the *only* people of God; but that good men of every nation ſhould be favoured with the knowledge of the Goſpel. Devout men muſt not now expect an Angel to point out their miſtakes; but learn, from the hiſtory of Cornelius, of what great conſequence it is to be right in their religion.

Acts xiii. 48.

The words, *ordained to eternal life*, have been miſunderſtood to mean that ſuch as did not believe the Goſpel, it was not their fault, becauſe they were not *ordained* to it. The truth is, the word, here tranſlated *ordained to*, ſignifies no more than *prepared*, or *diſpoſed for*, eternal life: and the meaning is, they that were well diſpoſed, readily embraced the Goſpel when it

was

was preached; while they that hated knowledge, and would not chuſe the fear of the Lord, *would not*, *could not* believe, and conſequently could not be ſaved.

ROMANS IX. 20.

We muſt not infer from this text, that God is arbitrary; or that his will is his only law: for in all caſes that can be put, which are contrary to juſtice and goodneſs, theſe words, *nay but O man, who art thou that replieſt againſt God*, are weak and trifling. But they may well be applied to ſuch queſtions as theſe: Why does God reveal his will to ſome nations, and not to others? Why does He not make all the World Chriſtians? Why has He not made all Creatures of the higheſt order? In all theſe things there is nothing contrary to juſtice; becauſe they are all favours, with his creatures have no right to claim. This verſe, and the whole chapter, relate to God's dealing with *nations* and *kingdoms*, and not to *particular perſons*, eſpecially as to determining their eternal happineſs or miſery, without any regard to their actions.

1 CORINTH. XV. 50.

It is a ſtrange perverſion of words to underſtand this long and beautiful deſcription of the reſurrection of the body in a *ſpiritual* ſenſe only, becauſe St. Paul ſays, *Fleſh and Blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God:* for it is clear that

that he all the while means, the real body of man, which he declares cannot enter into Heaven in its preſent corruptible ſtate, as it is in this life; but *ſhall be changed*, and the *dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible*, and the ſame *corruptible Body* ſhall *put on incorruption*.

GALATIANS iv. 10.

St. Paul reproaches the Galatians, for *obſerving days, and months, and times, and years*. Theſe were the days and times formerly obſerved by the Jews, but aboliſhed and taken away by Chriſt and his Apoſtles; yet the judaizing Chriſtians endeavoured to impoſe them upon the Galatians as neceſſary to ſalvation. This no way concerns ſuch an obſervation of days as Chriſtians now uſe.

GALATIANS v. 1.

The liberty, which the Apoſtle directs the Church to *ſtand faſt in*, is not, as many fancy, a liberty of chuſing what religion they pleaſe; and refuſing ſubjection to the governors of the Church; but a freedom from the yoke of the old Levitical law, as circumciſion, ſacrifices, and many coſtly rites and ceremonies.

PHILIP. i. 1. 1 TIM. iii. 1.

It is ſuppoſed that in both theſe texts, the word *Biſhop* comprehends the office both of *Biſhop* and *Prieſt:* from whence ſome falſely conclude,

conclude, that there is no difference between them. It by no means follows that they are one and the ſame order. Deacons, as well as prieſts, are now commonly called *miniſters*. It does not therefore follow, that they are of the ſame order. It was never pretended that a *Deacon* was a *Prieſt*, though the name *miniſter* is common to both.

PHILIP. iv. 3.

Whoſe names are written in the book of life, is a Jewiſh expreſſion, and does not at all imply any abſolute decree, or predeſtination to eternal life, but ſignifies their being regiſtered in that corporation or ſociety where eternal life was the privilege, on condition of faith and obedience. It was the cuſtom of the Jews, Greeks, and Romans, to regiſter the inhabitants of cities; and blot out their names again as ſoon as they died.

COLLOSS. ii. 16.

Objectors ſtop at the word *holiday*, becauſe the latter part of the verſe ſhews, that the whole makes no more againſt obſerving *holidays*, than the *Sabbath*; for it is, *let no man judge you in reſpect of an holiday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath*. There is no command in Scripture to obſerve the preſent Sabbath: but there is an expreſs command to obſerve a *feaſt*, or *holiday*, 1 Cor. v. 8. Diſſenters obſerve faſts and thankſgiving-days, on account of war and peace.

Surely

Surely that is *obſerving of days*, and days of far leſs conſequence to us than thoſe of the birth or death of Jeſus Chriſt, his reſurrection, or aſcenſion, which are greater bleſſings than the greateſt victory, or moſt laſting peace.

1 Thess. v. 19.

Who could have thought that theſe words, *quench not the ſpirit*, could have been ſo wreſted as to forbid praying by a form of words in a book, as if ſuch a method of praying quenched the ſpirit. Our Saviour thought the contrary, or he would not have given that *form of prayer* to his diſciples, which we call *the Lord's prayer*. It is indeed pretended, that this was to be only a pattern how to pray: but ſee p. 130. Matt. vi. 9.

1 Thess. v. 21.

Prove all things, hold faſt that which is good, has been miſunderſtood to encourage running after various teachers, and ways of religious worſhip, under pretence of trying all religions firſt, before they ſettle: whereas this relates to enquiries into ſpiritual gifts given in thoſe times, as propheſying, &c. &c.

1 Timothy iii. 2. 12.

Neither of theſe texts, which require *Biſhops and Deacons to be the huſband of one wife*, do forbid ſecond marriages, in caſe of the wives'

death

death. Nor do they mean that a perſon ſhould marry no more than one wife at a time, which is not allow'd in any Chriſtian country: but rather, that men ſhould not cauſeleſsly put away their wives, if they did not pleaſe them, or becauſe they diſliked them, and marry others while the former were living; which liberty the Jews allow'd themſelves, Deut. xxiv. 3. Eccluſ. xxv. 26. but Chriſt forbids, Mark x. 11.

Hebrews xii. 17.

To argue from hence, that God will not accept of ſincere repentance, is extremely wrong: for the Apoſtle does not ſay that Eſau never repented ſo as to obtain forgiveneſs from God; but, that *he found no place of repentance though he ſought it carefully with tears*; or he could not, by his tears, prevail with his Father Iſaac to repent, that is, to recal the bleſſing he had given to his brother Jacob.

James v. 12.

This text is urged to prove that every kind of oath is unlawful. *Swear not, neither by Heaven, neither by the Earth, neither by any other oath.* It might as well have been, *neither by any ſuch kind of oath.* Or the verſe may be read without any ſtop after the word *not:* thus; *my brethren, ſwear not by Heaven, nor by the Earth.* Chriſtian ſoldiers took an oath when they enliſted,

liſted, which ſhews that all ſwearing is not forbidden to Chriſtians.

1 Peter iii. 21.

It is a poor pretence for diſannulling Baptiſm, to ſay that it is repreſented by St. Peter, as *the anſwer of a good conſcience toward God*, and *not the putting away the filth of the fleſh*: for he only means, that the *inward* Baptiſm is to be preferred to the *outward* waſhing. So it was under the law. The *outward Circumciſion of the fleſh* was not the chief thing meant: but the *inward Circumciſion of the heart*; as the Apoſtle ſpeaks Romans ii. 28, 29. Yet we know that the outward form of Circumciſion was to be complied with under the ſevereſt penalties.

2 Peter iii. 9.

There have been ſome ſo obſtinately perverſe, as to contend that theſe words, *the Lord is not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance*, are not to be underſtood generally of *all*, men, but only mean *ſome of all ſorts of men*, that is, ſome among the Jews, ſome among the Gentiles, ſome rich, ſome poor. This opinion diſcovers great ignorance of language: for the words, *all men*, muſt always in common language ſignify, *all men againſt whom no exception is intended*; and in no language whatever can they mean *ſome only of every*

every ſort: therefore they cannot be ſo underſtood in this place.

1 John iii. 9.

Too much ſtreſs has been laid upon theſe words, *whoſoever is born of God cannot ſin:* as if a man ſhould fancy himſelf ſo high in God's favour, as to be ſure that he ſhould never err more. They only mean, that ſuch a man cannot *reconcile* himſelf to ſin. Thus we ſay, an honeſt man cannot lie, a generous man cannot be guilty of a mean action. So alſo, *doth not commit ſin*, means, he *alloweth* not himſelf in any ſinful action.

Revel. xviii. 4.

St. John's words, *come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her ſins*, are often, though raſhly, applied to the forſaking or withdrawing from any Chriſtian way of worſhip, becauſe it is not exactly agreeable to our notions. It is indeed a command to all Chriſtians, to forſake the communion of Idolaters. St. Paul ſays much the ſame thing to the Corinthians, 2 Cor. vi. 17. They lived in the midſt of Heathens, and were often invited to their Idol Feaſts, at which ſome of them did not ſcruple to eat of things ſacrificed to Idols; therefore he adds, *touch not the unclean thing.*

THE PARABLES.

JUDGES ix. 8.

The Trees chuſe a King.

BY this fable *Jotham* ſignifies to the men of *Shechem*, that the moſt worthy men in Iſrael (whom he repreſents by the moſt excellent trees, the *Olive*, the *Fig-tree*, and the *Vine*), had not deſired any kingly power over them: and his father *Gideon* had refuſed it when offered to him. By the vileſt of ſhrubs, the *bramble*, accepting the offer of the trees to be their king, and calling them to put their truſt in its ſhadow, he ſhews what a worthleſs choice they had made. The *ſpeech of the bramble* repreſents, how fooliſh *Abimelech* was, in imagining he ſhould

ſhould be able to afford them (any more than the bramble) the ſhade or protection he had promiſed. The *threat of the bramble* ſhews the cruelty of Abimelech's temper, that he would deſtroy the Shechemites, if he found them unfaithful.

2 Sam. xii. 1.

The Ewe Lamb.

The *rich man that had many flocks and herds*, was *David*, who had many wives and concubines, with whom he ſhould have been content, without violating another man's bed. *Bath-ſheba* was very likely the only wife of *Uriah*, here called his *only lamb*, with whom he was perfectly well ſatisfied, and ſhe with him. The *traveller* means David's ſtraggling appetite, or wandering deſire; which may be ſaid in the beginning to be like a traveller, in time becomes a gueſt, and at laſt entirely lord and maſter. Nathan's reply, *thou art the man*, is as much as to ſay, thou O King art the offender, thou art the judge, and haſt pronounced a dreadful ſentence againſt thyſelf.

2 Kings xiv. 9.

The Cedar and Thiſtle.

Whether this was the original Parable, or whether it refers to another that was become a

common Proverb, or to that of *Jotham* before mentioned, is uncertain. The thiſtle, a mean, vulgar weed, having drawn blood from ſome one, became proud, and would be thought equal to the Cedar, the nobleſt of trees. In the midſt of its pride and arrogance it is trodden down and deſtroyed. Such *Jehoaſh* ſignifies to *Amaziah* would be his fate, if he continued to inſult him: and ſuch really was the fate of that King of Judah, and his party. See verſe xii. 13.

MATT. xiii. 24.

Of the Tares.

This Parable ſhews plainly, that the wickedneſs of men can not be prevented without diſturbing the order of nature. It is not fit always to puniſh ſinners in this life, becauſe of their connection with the righteous, who would neceſſarily ſuffer by their ruin. It alſo teaches us to wait our maſter's time, and be patient, *till the day of our Lord come*, when a perfect and endleſs ſeparation ſhall be made: then the good ſhall be everlaſtingly rewarded, and the evil puniſhed eternally.

MATT. xiii. 31. MARK iv. 31. LUKE xiii. 19.

Of the Muſtard-ſeed.

The *grain* of *muſtard-ſeed* here means the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, which was to prevail againſt

againſt all oppoſition, and from ſmall beginnings ſoon ſpread itſelf through the world, and afford to humble and fearful ſouls a comfortable retreat. This Parable may alſo be conſidered as a Prophecy; and we now ſee the fulfilling of it.

MATT. xiii. 45.

The Pearl of great Price.

By this and the Parable before it, of *a treaſure hid in a field*, is repreſented the great excellency of the *Chriſtian religion* above all things in the world: and that it is the greateſt wiſdom to part with all that the world can afford, rather than *it*, which is a pearl of ſo great price, that nothing can compare with it. *It is more to be deſired than gold, yea than much fine gold.* Pſalm xv. 10. *And* Solomon ſays, *happy is the man that findeth wiſdom*, or religion, *and the man that getteth underſtanding; for the merchandize of it is better than the merchandize of ſilver, and the gain thereof than fine gold: ſhe is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canſt deſire are not to be compared unto her.* Proverbs iii. 13, 14, 15.

MATT. xiii. 47.

The Net caſt into the Sea.

By the expreſſion of *the kingdom of Heaven*, is ſignified, the *Goſpel of Chriſt*, with the ſucceſs

of it. *The kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net caſt into the ſea, and which gathered of every kind.* That is, at the firſt publiſhing the Goſpel of Chriſt, many, both good and bad, pretended to be his diſciples and followers. So in the Chriſtian Church there will always be ſincere Chriſtians and hypocrites mixt together: but at the laſt day a juſt and eternal difference will be made between the righteous and the wicked. This Parable, which reſpects the preſent and future ſtate of good and bad men, overthrows the doctrine of Predeſtination. The good are ſaved, only becauſe they are good: and the bad rejected, merely becauſe they are bad.

MATT. xviii. 23.

The unmerciful Servant.

Two things are particularly intended by this Parable: The method God takes in his dealing with mankind, expreſs'd by the *king's taking account of his ſervants:* and, ſecondly, his great diſpleaſure againſt thoſe who will not imitate his example in forgiving ſuch as have injured them, expreſſed by the *king's being angry with his unmerciful ſervant.* The prodigious debt *of ten thouſand talents* (above a million of our money), and the *impoſſibility of paying it*, ſhews the greatneſs of our offences againſt God, and our inability to make him ſatisfaction. The ſad conſequence of this is expreſſed by the *Lord's commanding*

commanding the debtor to be ſold, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The great mercy of God in forgiving ſin, is ſignified by the Lord's *being moved with compaſſion to forgive the debt*; and our duty to be merciful, and the conſequence of not being ſo, is ſhewn by what followed, *he was delivered over to the tormentors.*

MATT. XX. 1.

The Labourers in the Vineyard.

The *houſeholder* here means *God.* The *Vineyard*, the publication of the Goſpel by Jeſus Chriſt. The *labourers* are all thoſe who profeſs the Chriſtian religion. The intent of the Parable is, to ſhew, that the Gentiles, though laſt called, ſhould enjoy as great privileges as the Jews, who had ſo long been the diſtinguiſhed people of God. To them the Goſpel was firſt preached; and they rejecting it, it was then offered to the Gentiles, who thankfully accepted it. As to the ſeveral hours mentioned in St. Matthew's Goſpel, the *third hour* means, nine o'clock in the morning: the *ſixth*, twelve at noon: the *ninth*, three in the afternoon: the *eleventh*, five in the evening. Some reckon the *firſt* time here, to mean the ſpace from Adam to Noah. The *third hour*, from Noah to Abraham. The *ſixth*, from Abraham to Moſes. The *ninth*, from Moſes to Chriſt. The

eleventh, from Chriſt to the end of the world. Others refer theſe to the different periods of man's life.

MATT. xxi. 33. MARK xii. 1. LUKE xx. 9.

The Lord of the Vineyard and the Huſbandmen.

God is here repreſented under the character of an *houſeholder*, or one who poſſeſſes a Vineyard of his own. The *huſbandmen* are the Jews. The *Vineyard* is his church or religion, which he planted in the Jewiſh nation. By the *hedge* is meant the Jewiſh law of ceremonies, which divided them from other nations. The *wine-preſs and tower* ſignify the altar and temple. God may be ſaid to *let his Vineyard* or church to the Jews; or rather to have hired them into it, when they were choſen to be his people. The *fruit* which God required, was the obſervance of his laws. The *ſervants* were the prophets; many of whom were uſed with great cruelty. The *ſon* was the Meſſiah: and the *other huſbandmen* the Gentiles. The prieſts and elders, by ſaying, *he will miſerably deſtroy thoſe wicked men, and let out his Vineyard to other huſbandmen*, unwarily paſſed a ſevere ſentence againſt themſelves. *Their* wickedneſs in killing Chriſt, the Lord of Life himſelf, was greater and more inexcuſable than that of their forefathers had been *in ſtoning them that had been ſent unto them.*

MATT.

MATT. xxii. 2.

The Marriage of the King's Son.

By the *king*, we muſt underſtand *God*. By the *ſon*, our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. By the *marriage Feaſt*, the benefits and bleſſings of the Chriſtian religion, and God's care in having that religion publiſhed. The *gueſts firſt invited* were the Jews. On their refuſal, *the king ſent his ſervants*, the Apoſtles, *into the highways, to call as many as would*, that is, to invite all mankind to embrace it. The Parable alſo repreſents the reception Chriſtianity ſhould meet with, expreſſed by men's *making light of it*, and offering excuſes. *The man without a wedding garment* means one who pretends to accept of the terms of ſalvation, but yet neglects to live according to the rules of the Goſpel. The time of the *king's coming* is the Day of Judgement.

MATT. xxv. 1.

The Ten Virgins.

This parable ſhews the manner in which God will treat thoſe at the Day of Judgement, who have been careleſs in preparing for it. The *Bridegroom* is our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. By *going forth to meet him* is ſignified, our preparing for his calling us by death. The *marriage* is, the Day of Judgement. The *Virgins*, are all who profeſs

profeſs the Chriſtian religion. By *half being wiſe, and half fooliſh*, is repreſented the great difference among Chriſtians, ſome idle and thoughtleſs, others wiſe and careful. By *the lamps*, is expreſſed the ſouls of men. By *oil*, the graces and virtues of Chriſtianity. By the Virgins *all ſlumbering and ſleeping*, the frailties of even the beſt of men. Becauſe Chriſt delayeth his coming, we ſometimes lay aſide the thought of it. By *the cry at midnight*, is meant, the unexpected appearance of death, or judgement. *The wiſe aroſe and trimmed their lamps:* ſo good men, when warned by age or ſickneſs, ſhould increaſe their piety. The *door being ſhut* before the others were ready, ſhews the weakeſs of a death-bed repentance; they that would enter in ſhould be prepared by a former courſe of holy living.

MATT. XXV. 14. LUKE XIX. 12.

Of the Talents.

The interpretation may be this. By a *man travelling into a far country*, is repreſented our Saviour's leaving this world, and aſcending into Heaven. By *calling his ſervants and delivering them his goods; to one, five talents, to another two*; is ſignified his giving men ſufficient grace, according to their ſeveral abilities, to perform their duty. By their *trading*, is ſhewn the improvement they make. By *hiding the talent*

in

in the earth, is expreſſed the ſloth and idleneſs of wicked men. By the *Lord's coming and reckoning with the ſervants*, is expreſſed the coming of Chriſt to judgement, at the end of the world. By his *commanding the talent to be taken from him that had made no uſe of it, and given to another who had improved his*; and ordering him *to be caſt into outer darkneſs*, is expreſſed the deplorable condition and eternal miſery of thoſe who do not improve the grace of God given to them in this life.—As the rewards mentioned in this Parable muſt mean thoſe which are to be given at the day of judgement, it is clear, that at the laſt day men will receive different rewards from God, in proportion to the different improvements they have made of the favours he has granted them.

Mark iv. 26.

Seed caſt into the Ground.

As the huſhandman does not, by any power of his own, cauſe the ſeed to grow, but leaves it to be nouriſhed by the Earth and Sun; ſo the Apoſtles of Chriſt, having taught men the true religion, were to ſuffer it to ſpread by the influence of God's Holy-Spirit, till it ſhould attain its full effect. And as the huſbandman cannot perceive the corn extending as it grows; ſo the miniſters of Chriſt were not, at firſt, to ſee the Goſpel make a quick progreſs through the world, and therefore were not to be diſcouraged

when they did not ſee ſucceſs immediately follow their labours. Thus it is now. A Chriſtian miniſter can only propoſe and lay before men the pleaſures that will certainly attend a virtuous life, and ſhew them the folly and unreaſonableneſs of ſin: he can only declare the great advantages which the Chriſtian religion has over all others; and endeavour to perſuade men to embrace it, but muſt leave the event and ſucceſs to God. *Paul* may *plant*, *Apollos* may *water*; it is *from God* only, that *the increaſe muſt come.* 1 Cor. iii. 6.

LUKE x. 30.

The good Samaritan.

The Jews would have no dealings with the Samaritans, who diſſented from them in matters of religion. The deſign therefore of this Parable is to give *them*, and *us*, a true notion of *charity:* the objects of which are, all really poor and neceſſitous perſons, without excepting any, whether they be ſtrangers or enemies, Heathens or heretics, or wicked perſons. We are *to do good to all men*, Gal. vi. 10. Chriſt commends the Samaritan's *charity* only, not his *religion.* He tells one of them, *Ye worſhip ye know not what*; and ſays, *ſalvation is of the Jews.* We muſt treat people that are in error with charity, at the ſame time that we deteſt their principles, and ſtrive to preſerve others from their infection.

LUKE

LUKE xi. 5.

The Friend and the Loaves.

The application of this Parable is, *aſk and it ſhall be given you*, &c. which ſhews that the deſign of it was, to enforce the duty of frequent prayer: like that of the *importunate widow*, Chapter xviii. 2. which ſee hereafter. To encourage his Diſciples under their ſufferings from the Jews, Chriſt aſſured them, that God's not immediately anſwering their prayers, by protecting them, was no reaſon for them to think that he wholly diſregarded them: but, if they continued to aſk with faith, earneſtneſs, and conſtancy, he would at laſt grant their reaſonable deſires.

LUKE xii. 16.

The covetous Rich Man.

It is plain that the intent of this Parable is to draw men from covetouſneſs, and expoſe the folly of being wholly employed in *laying up treaſures in this life*, and taking little or no care to be *rich toward God*. The covetous rich man was ſuddenly ſnatch'd away from his abundance: every rich man therefore is very unwiſe, who, flattering himſelf with the hope of many years to come, truſts in his riches, and neglects religion.

LUKE xiii. 6.

The barren Fig-tree.

Both Jews and Chriſtians may be intended by the *Fig-tree.* God choſe the Jews to be his peculiar people, expecting that they ſhould ſerve and obey him but they became a diſobedient and wicked people God, ſeeing their obſtinacy, reſolved to deſtroy them; yet he made them one more offer of mercy by ſending Jeſus Chriſt, and his Apoſtles; after which, if they rejected that offer, he determined to deſtroy them without mercy. In this manner does God deal with men *under the Goſpel.* He firſt *plants them in his Vineyard,* the Church of Chriſt, that there by the good cultivating of his miniſters, and the influences of his Holy Spirit on their ſouls, they may become *fruitful in good works.* After God has, with much patience, ſought for fruit in vain, his *juſtice* requires to give them up to everlaſting burning yet his *mercy* (through the interceſſion of Jeſus Chriſt, *the dreſſer of his Vineyard,*) inclines him to forbear a little longer, till by repeated exhortations of the miniſters of his Goſpel, and repeated motions of the Holy Ghoſt, they ſhall be cultivated afreſh. Then, *if they bear fruit, well,* happy will it be for them; but if not, after that, *he will cut them down,* and deſtroy them utterly.

LUKE

Luke xiv. 16.

The great Supper.

God ſent St. John the baptiſt firſt, to invite the Jews; and afterward, he ſent the Apoſtles and ſeventy Diſciples, to tell them, *the kingdom of Heaven was at hand*, and to perſuade them to enter into it. They, preferring the pleaſures or advantage of the world, refuſed. After Chriſt's reſurrection, the Apoſtles were again ſent both to Jews and Gentiles, Acts i. 8. Notwithſtanding Chriſt hath ſaid of thoſe who refuſed to come, *they ſhall not taſte of my ſupper*, that is, ſhall not enjoy the bleſſings of his kingdom; yet ſtill wicked men endeavour by various pretences to excuſe themſelves from attending to the great buſineſs of religion; the one thing needful.

Luke xv. 11.

The Prodigal Son.

This whole chapter is intended to repreſent the great compaſſion of God toward ſinners; his great deſire they ſhould repent and turn from their wicked courſes; and how pleaſing it is to him when they ſincerely do ſo. This is expreſſed in three Parables; *The loſt ſheep*, verſe 4. *The piece of ſilver*, verſe 8; and *the prodigal ſon*. In the latter, the *father* means God,

God, who is the Father of all mankind: the *elder ſon*, the Jewiſh nation: and the *younger ſon*, or *Prodigal*, the publicans and ſinners. This Parable finely ſhews the folly and extravagance of the wicked, who give themſelves up to follow their own wills:—the ſad condition of ſuch ſinners in their fallen ſtate, when they find themſelves ruined and undone:—the ſharp reproof of conſcience when they recover their reaſon; which moves them to return to their obedience to God, their heavenly Father:—and his readineſs to receive to favour ſuch as earneſtly repent, and keep their reſolutions. Let them who have been thus received, wander no more.

LUKE xvi. 1.

The unjuſt Steward.

All mankind are *ſtewards to God*. What we have is not our own property: we muſt *give an account of our* ſtewardſhip. Our Lord, or, rather, the unjuſt ſteward's Lord, did not commend him becauſe he had acted *diſhoneſtly*; but becauſe he had *done wiſely for himſelf*. Chriſt would have Chriſtians act as wiſely and diligently in employing their riches in acts of piety and charity, to ſecure their eternal welfare, as worldly men do, in laying out theirs to the greateſt temporal profit: not to get wealth by unjuſt means, but rather to lay out what Providence has bleſſed them with in works of mercy, that ſo they may *lay up for themſelves treaſures in Heaven*;

Heaven; or be received into Heaven when they die.

Luke xvi. 19.

The rich Man and Lazarus.

This Parable is formed on the doctrine of a future ſtate as it prevailed in the Jewiſh Church at that time. It informs us of theſe three things: firſt; that from men's proſperous or adverſe condition in *this life*, there is no judgement to be made, concerning their condition in *the next:* for the happineſs of men *here*, is often exchanged for miſery *hereafter*. Solomon has long ſince obſerved, that *no man knoweth either* the *love or hatred* of God *by all that is before them*. Eccleſ. ix. 1. Secondly, whatever alteration is made in the condition of the ſoul after its departure from the body, it ſhall be from thenceforth for ever unchangeable: and, thirdly, that every man may be ſure of this from Scripture: and they who are not ſatisfied with what the Scripture ſays to prove this, will never be ſatisfied, *though one ſhould riſe from the dead* to aſſure them of it. The many, who ſaw Jeſus Chriſt after his reſurrection; and the many more, who converſed with Lazarus after he roſe from the dead, and were not convinced; are wonderful proofs of this truth.

Luke xviii. 2.

The importunate Widow.

St. Luke tells us plainly, that our Saviour ſpake this Parable to this end, *that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* They ſhould not leave off, or deſpair; though they do not receive a ſpeedy anſwer to their prayers. The ſtrength of the argument, to perſuade men to a conſtant devotion, lies in this: that if *importunity* will prevail with a ſinful man, to grant a requeſt contrary to his inclination; how much more readily will a good God relieve the wants of his children who are conſtantly and earneſtly aſking his help!

Luke xviii. 9.

The Phariſee and Publican.

The beginning and end of this Parable ſhew, that it is levelled againſt *ſpiritual pride*; or having ſo high an opinion of our own righteouſneſs, as to *deſpiſe others.* It was firſt intended to mortify the Phariſees; and encourage the Publicans, and thoſe they called ſinners: but principally to ſhew, that an humble ſinner, who is ſenſible of his wickedneſs, and with ſhame and ſorrow confeſſes his guilt before God, is more acceptable in his ſight, and ſhall ſooner be pardoned by him, than he who boaſts of his virtue

and

and religion. Thus it recommends the virtue of humility, and ſhews, that though a man have never ſo much goodneſs, yet, if he be proud of it, this is odious in the ſight of God.—May we then, above all things, be ſincere in our religion! The Scripture ſaith, *my ſon, give me thy heart.* Proverbs xxiii. 26. God loves an honeſt heart, and an upright mind, and there is nothing ſo abominable in his ſight as an hypocrite. The lower we are in our own eyes, the higher in God's ſight: for *every one that exalteth himſelf ſhall be abaſed, and he that humbleth himſelf ſhall be exalted.* Luke xiv. 11. The want of ſincerity in religion will quite ſpoil the virtue of it all, and totally deprive us of the rewards of it. Religion conſiſts not in ſhew, but in ſubſtance; not in outward appearance, but in real effects. *Not every one that ſaith to me, Lord, Lord, ſhall enter into the kingdom* of Heaven, ſaith our Saviour, in Matthew vii. 21. *but he that doeth the will of my father which is in Heaven.* That we may be enabled to do it, *God grant us in this world knowledge of his truth, and in the world to come life everlaſting!*

To the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

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